THE SERMON AT THE TEMPLE IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

A Critical Examination of Its Authenticity through a Comparison with the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

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ABSTRACT

The Sermon at the Temple is a passage in the Book of Mormon, first published by Joseph Smith in 1830 as the founding scripture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This passage narrates Jesus appearing at a temple to inhabitants of the Americas, called Nephites, shortly after his ascension and preaching the Sermon on the Mount to the Nephites very much as it appears in Matthew 5-7 in the King James Version. This study investigates the historical authenticity of this "Sermon at the Temple" by utilizing the tools of biblical scholarship such as textual criticism, source criticism, redaction criticism, and socio-cultural analysis.

Against criticisms by Mormon scholars, the study defends the textual and historical reliability of the Gospel of Matthew as well as the conventional view of biblical scholarship that the Sermon on the Mount as it appears in Matthew owed much of its arrangement and wording to the literary work of the Evangelist. An overview of issues pertaining to the Book of Mormon, including its origins, historical claims, and use of the Bible, explains why assertions of the historical authenticity of the Sermon at the Temple bear the burden of proof.

The Sermon at the Temple is then shown to be a literary composition dependent on the Matthean Sermon on the Mount and specifically on the text and wording of the Sermon as it appears in the King James Version. Evidence is given showing that the Sermon on the Mount reflects the specific cultural context of first-century Jewish society in the Mediterranean world, that the Sermon at the Temple shows no significant adaptation to a different ancient cultural context, and that all of the changes to the Sermon made in the Book of Mormon are best understood as reflecting its nineteenth-century composition. The conclusion is drawn that the Sermon at the Temple is indeed a fictive adaptation by Joseph Smith of the King James Version edition of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount. On the basis of this conclusion, the Book of Mormon is properly classified as apocryphal.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bible Texts, Versions, Books, Etc.

ESV	English Standard Version (this work's default version)
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
NAB	New American Bible
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NET	New English Translation
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint (Pietersma and Wright eds. 2009)
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version

Parts and Books of the Bible

OT	**Old Testament**
Gen.	Genesis
Exod.	Exodus
Lev.	Leviticus
Num.	Numbers
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Josh.	Joshua
Judg.	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1-2 Sam.	1-2 Samuel
1-2 Kgs.	1-2 Kings
1-2 Chr.	1-2 Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra

Neh.	Nehemiah
Esth.	Esther
Job	Job
Ps.	Psalms
Prov.	Proverbs
Eccl.	Ecclesiastes
Song	Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Lam.	Lamentations
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Dan.	Daniel
Hos.	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obad.	Obadiah
Jonah	Jonah
Mic.	Micah
Nah.	Nahum
Hab.	Habakkuk
Zeph.	Zephaniah
Hag.	Haggai
Zech.	Zechariah
Mal.	Malachi
NT	**New Testament**
Matt.	Matthew
Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke
John	John (Gospel of)
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Rom.	Romans
1-2 Cor.	1-2 Corinthians

Gal.	Galatians
Eph.	Ephesians
Phil.	Philippians
Col.	Colossians
1-2 Thess.	1-2 Thessalonians
1-2 Tim.	1-2 Timothy
Titus	Titus
Heb.	Hebrews
Jas.	James
1-2 Pet.	1-2 Peter
1-2-3 John	1-2-3 John
Jude	Jude
Rev.	Revelation

LDS Scriptures

Book of Mormon

1 Ne.	1 Nephi
2 Ne.	2 Nephi
Jacob	Jacob
Enos	Enos
Jarom	Jarom
Omni	Omni
W. of M.	Words of Mormon
Mosiah	Mosiah
Alma	Alma
Hel.	Helaman
3 Ne.	3 Nephi
4 Ne.	4 Nephi
Mormon	Mormon
Ether	Ether
Moro.	Moroni

Doctrine & Covenants **(D&C)**

Pearl of Great Price

Moses	Book of Moses
Abr.	Book of Abraham
JS-M	Joseph Smith—Matthew
JS-H	Joseph Smith—History
A. of F.	Articles of Faith

General Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AD	*Anno Domini*
Ant.	Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*
ANTF	Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung
BAR	*Biblical Archaeological Review*
BC	Before Christ
BDB	Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew-English Lexicon* (2001)
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT
Bib	*Biblica*
BIOSCS	*Bulletin of the International Organization of Septuagint and Cognate Studies* (later called *Journal of Septuagint and Cognate Studies*)
BRev	*Bible Review*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BYU	Brigham Young University
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica: NT Series
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum

Dialogue	*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*
EM	*Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (D. Ludlow ed. 1992)
EMD	*Early Mormon Documents* (Vogel ed. 1996-2003)
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FAIR	Foundation for Apologetics Information and Research
FARMS	Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies
HC	*History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Roberts ed. 1902)
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HvTSt	*Hervormde teologiese studies*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the NT Supplement Series
JSP—H1	*Joseph Smith Papers: Histories, Volume 1* (Davidson, Whittaker, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen 2012)
JSP—H2	*Joseph Smith Papers: Histories, Volume 2* (Davidson, Jensen, and Whittaker 2012)
JSP—J1	*Joseph Smith Papers: Journals, Volume 1* (Jessee, Esplin, and Bushman 2008)
JSP—J2	*Joseph Smith Papers: Journals, Volume 2* (Hedges, Smith, and Anderson 2011)

JSP—RT1	*Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Volume 1* (Jensen, Woodford, and Harper 2011)
JSP—RT2	*Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Volume 2* (Jensen, Turley, and Lorimer 2011)
JSP—RTF	*Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books: Facsimile Edition.* (Jensen, Woodford, and Harper 2009)
JST	Joseph Smith Translation
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LDS	Latter-day Saints
NAC	New American Commentary
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NET/NTG	*New English Translation/Novum Testamentum Graece: New Testament* (Burer, Harris, and Wallace eds. 2004)
NIBCNT	New International Biblical Commentary on the NT
NICNT	New International Commentary on the NT
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Supplements to *Novum Testamentum*
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
RSR	*Religious Studies Review*
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSP	*Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SD	Studies and Documents
SM	Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7)
SNTSMS	Society for NT Studies Monograph Series

SP	Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20-49)
ST	Sermon at the Temple (3 Ne. 12-14)
TR	Textus Receptus
TrinJ	*Trinity Journal*
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TWOT	Harris, Archer, and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the OT* (1980)
UBS	United Bible Societies
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VTSup	Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

TABLES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: The Sermon on the Mount in the Book of Mormon

1.1.1 The Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon is the most famous "scripture" of the Mormons, whose religion is officially called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter *LDS Church* or just *LDS*). Its "Introduction" quotes Joseph Smith, the founder of the LDS Church, as saying, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (see §1.1.8 on citations from the LDS scriptures). First published in 1830, in 2010 the number of copies of the Book of Mormon in print reached 150 million, including complete versions in 82 languages (Kunz 2010).

The Book of Mormon purports to be a translation by Joseph Smith of a collection of ancient writings produced by prophets of the "Nephites"—descendants of Israelites who lived in the Americas from about 600 BC to AD 421. Joseph (to whom Mormons commonly refer by his first name only, cf. Gutjahr 2012, xix) claimed that the Book of Mormon was written on gold plates that the Nephite prophet Mormon's son Moroni had buried fifteen centuries earlier in a hill near Joseph's home in Palmyra, New York. Moroni, now an angel, appeared to Joseph in 1823 and told him about the plates, visiting him again once a year for the next four years, and finally allowed Joseph to take custody of the plates in 1827 (JS-H 1:27-59). Joseph dictated the text of his "translation" to associates who served as his scribes (after which Joseph said he returned the plates to Moroni), and in 1830 the Book of Mormon was published. It consists of fifteen separate "books" (one of which is also called the Book of Mormon) and runs approximately 267,000 words in length. Its centrepiece narrative is in the book of 3 Nephi, which recounts Jesus Christ, following his ascension, visiting the Nephites and preaching to them.

TABLE 1. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF MORMON[1]		
Book (Chapters)	**Dates**	**Brief Summary**
1 Nephi (22)	600-570 BC	Lehi and his son Nephi sail to the Americas
2 Nephi (33)	570-545 BC	Lehi dies; Nephi quotes Isaiah, prophesies
Jacob (7)	544-421 BC	Nephi's son Jacob preaches Christ
Enos (1)	544-421 BC	Jacob's son Enos preaches Christ
Jarom (1)	399-361 BC	Enos's son Jarom preaches Christ
Omni (1)	361-130 BC	Mosiah discovers Zarahemla
Words of Mormon (1)	AD 385	Mormon abridges the records
Mosiah (29)	200-91 BC	Mosiah (the Second) rules the Nephites
Alma (63)	91-52 BC	Alma and his sons preach Christ
Helaman (16)	51-1 BC	Helaman's son Nephi returns to Zarahemla
3 Nephi (30)	AD 1-35	The risen Christ appears to the Nephites
4 Nephi (1)	36-321	The New World church becomes apostate
Book of Mormon (9)	322-421	Lamanites defeat the Nephites
Ether (15)	(undated)	About the Jaredites from the Tower of Babel
Moroni (10)	400-421	Moroni seals up Mormon's records

1.1.2 The Bible in the Book of Mormon

One of the most often-noted features of the Book of Mormon is its use of extensive quotations from the Bible. Critics of the Book of Mormon have long argued that its inclusion of numerous long passages from the Bible (in addition to many other quotations from and allusions to biblical passages) is clear evidence of its lack of historical authenticity. In sum, 27 of the 239 chapters of the Book of Mormon repeat chapters substantially or even nearly verbatim from the King James Version (KJV; see Table 2). For example, in the original, 1830 edition, 2 Nephi 21 is verbally identical to Isaiah 11 in the KJV, a passage of 519 words (later editions read the same except for the omission of "the" in Isaiah 11:6).

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[1]The dates shown here are those given in the footnotes of modern editions of the Book of Mormon; in some cases, these dates are said to be approximate.

TABLE 2. MAJOR BIBLICAL PASSAGES REPRODUCED IN THE BOOK OF MORMON		
Bible	*Book of Mormon*	*Quoted By*
Isaiah 48-49	1 Nephi 20-21	Nephi
Isaiah 50:1-52:2	2 Nephi 7-8	Jacob
Isaiah 2-14	2 Nephi 12-24	Nephi
Isaiah 29:6-24	2 Nephi 27:2-5, 15-19, 25-35	Nephi
Exodus 20:2-17	Mosiah 12:34-36; 13:12-24	Abinadi
Isaiah 53	Mosiah 14	Abinadi
Matthew 5-7	3 Nephi 12-14	Jesus
Isaiah 52:1-3, 6-15	3 Nephi 20:32, 34-45	Jesus
Isaiah 54	3 Nephi 22	Jesus
Malachi 3-4	3 Nephi 24-25	Jesus

Although critics sometimes use the word *plagiarism* to describe the appearance of these biblical chapters in the Book of Mormon, technically that term would not be correct. Plagiarism is usually understood to mean *unacknowledged* use of someone else's material. In the case of the duplication of biblical chapters in the Book of Mormon, the use is clearly acknowledged within the Book of Mormon itself.

All but three of the 27 chapters of the Bible duplicated in the Book of Mormon come from the Old Testament (21 from Isaiah, one from Exodus, and two from Malachi). All of these duplications are presented in the narrative of the Book of Mormon as direct quotations from those Old Testament (OT) writings by figures in the narrative (see again Table 2 above). According to the narrative, the entire book of Isaiah was written before Nephi's family travelled to the Americas around 600 BC,[2]

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[2]The Book of Mormon, by quoting Isaiah 48-54, presupposes that those chapters were written before 600 BC. This assumption disagrees with the views of most modern critical scholars, who think that Isaiah 40-66 was written after the Babylonian Exile (though some scholars have suggested that parts of it were perhaps written during the Exile). On the other hand, conservative evangelical scholars often maintain the traditional view that Isaiah was the author of the entire book bearing his name. This issue is not of direct relevance to this study and will not be pursued here.

and the family took "plates of brass" with them containing Isaiah and other OT writings (e.g., 1 Ne. 3:3; 4:16; 5:14-19; 19:21-22). In 3 Nephi 24-25, the narrative has Jesus quoting aloud Malachi 3-4 for the benefit of the Nephites, who had no copy of Malachi and had never heard it before (since Malachi was written two centuries after their ancestors had left Jerusalem). Whatever one may think about the duplication of so much material from the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon, the narrative does directly acknowledge that it is quoting those OT passages.

1.1.3 The Sermon at the Temple

The issue with regard to the three New Testament chapters duplicated in the Book of Mormon is somewhat different. The duplicated chapters are Matthew 5-7, commonly known as the *Sermon on the Mount* (hereafter *SM*). According to the Book of Mormon, Jesus preached that same sermon, with some variations from how it reads in the KJV of Matthew 5-7, to the Nephites when he appeared to them shortly after his resurrection (3 Ne. 12-14). According to the Book of Mormon, after Jesus finished the sermon he told the Nephites, "Behold, ye have heard the things which I taught before I ascended to my Father" (1 Ne. 15:1), which apparently is meant as an acknowledgment that the sermon was essentially the same as the SM.

The Book of Mormon places this meeting of Jesus with the Nephites "round about the temple which was in the land Bountiful" (2 Ne. 11:1). For this reason, Mormon scholars beginning with John W. Welch (1988, later published as Welch 1992b) have referred to this Book of Mormon version of the sermon as the *Sermon at the Temple* (hereafter *ST*). According to Welch, "Since the 1830s, the Sermon on the Mount has been considered by critics to be the Achilles heel of the Book of Mormon" (Welch 1994a, 152). In essence, the question such critics have raised is whether it is plausible that Jesus would have delivered to the Nephites the same sermon he had preached in Galilee and in almost the same wording as found in the KJV of the Gospel of Matthew. Since the 1970s, Mormon and non-Mormon scholars have debated various aspects of the SM and especially its appearance in the Book of Mormon as the ST. The debate has focused especially on three issues.

First, scholars have debated whether a comparison of the SM as it appears in the KJV and the ST in the Book of Mormon with the extant Greek manuscripts of Matthew shows that the ST is dependent on the KJV. The ground-breaking article on

this issue was by former Mormon scholar Stanley R. Larson (1986; 1993), who argued that insights from textual criticism showed that the ST was dependent on the KJV. Welch responded (Welch 1990, 145-63; Welch 1994a, 152-68; Welch 1999, 199-210), arguing that Larson's evidence was inconclusive at best and that in at least one text there was good evidence that the ST was independent of the KJV. More recently, an article by evangelical New Testament scholar Ron Huggins included a brief critique of one aspect of Welch's argument (Huggins 2003, 165-68).

Second, scholars have discussed whether the origins of the Synoptic Gospels shed light on the origin of the SM in the Book of Mormon. Here Huggins and Welch have been the main participants, though neither has directly addressed the other's arguments. Huggins maintained the academic majority viewpoint that Mark's Gospel was the main source for Matthew, and that Matthew's material for the SM came either from Luke or from a common source that both of them used ("Q"). On this basis, Huggins argued that the Book of Mormon ST, which is so similar to Matthew 5-7, must have been derived from it (Huggins 1997). By contrast, Welch argued that the conventional scholarly viewpoint was dubious at best and that Mormons were warranted in accepting the ST as evidence against those scholarly majorities (Welch 1990, 164-77; Welch 1999, 211-37).

Third, scholars have explored the significance of the differences in the ST as compared to the SM. Lutheran scholar Krister Stendahl (1978) argued that the ST exhibited changes characteristic of apocryphal writings that expanded on earlier religious texts, while Vernon Robbins (1995) argued that the omissions of some words from the Lord's Prayer in the ST reflected Joseph's different socio-economic and cultural perspective. At the other end of the spectrum, Welch (1990; 1999) argued that the differences in the ST reflected the ancient context of the speech, and in particular the religious, ritual context of Jesus' sermon to the Nephites. LDS author Brant Gardner (2007) took a mediating view, arguing that some of the changes reflect a different ancient setting but other changes reflected Joseph's sometimes limited understanding.

Welch has been a key figure in discussions of all three of these topics. He is a professor of law at Brigham Young University (teaching courses in scriptural studies as well as law) and editor-in-chief of *BYU Studies.* In 1979 he established the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), which is now

part of the Maxwell Institute at BYU. For many years this organization was the premier Mormon academic think-tank, disseminating much of the growing body of scholarly literature defending the ancient origins and historical authenticity of the Mormon scriptures. (Changes at the Maxwell Institute in 2012 has resulted in some realignment of Mormon apologetics; cf. Stack 2012.) Welch also serves on the executive committee of the Biblical Law Section of the Society of Biblical Literature. Welch's first book on the ST (Welch 1990) was one of the numerous publications cited by Carl Mosser and Paul Owen in their *Trinity Journal* article urging evangelical scholars to take seriously Mormon scholarship (Mosser and Owen 1998, 188 n. 35). In that book Welch argued that the ST is historically authentic and that its temple setting provides an interpretive key that resolves perennial controversial questions concerning the unity and meaning of the biblical SM. Welch produced an expanded second edition of that book (Welch 1999) and more recently an academic monograph applying the same interpretive approach to the SM (Welch 2009).

1.2 Research Problem:

Is the Sermon at the Temple Historically Authentic?

The central problem around which the issues just mentioned revolve may be stated quite simply: *Did it happen?* That is, did Jesus really visit a group of people in the Western Hemisphere shortly after his resurrection and preach to them an alternate version of the SM? To put the question another way, is the ST historically authentic? This is the problem that will be the subject of this study. So stated, the problem may be characterized as related to the field of study commonly known as *historical Jesus studies.* The task is to determine, as much as the evidence permits, just how likely it is that the narrative of 3 Nephi 12-14 records an event of history.

From another perspective, the problem here is the relationship between the Book of Mormon, specifically the ST, and the Bible, specifically the SM. Is the ST historically or literarily dependent on the SM as it appears in the Bible (in Matthew), or is it not dependent on the Matthean SM? This is essentially the same research problem from another angle because if the ST actually originates from Matthew, it cannot be a historically authentic sermon preached by Jesus to the Nephites. Conversely, if the ST is not dependent on Matthew's SM, then it would seem that the ST is an ancient sermon preached by Jesus as the Book of Mormon claims.

However, it is conceivable that the ST is only *partially* dependent on the SM as it appears in Matthew. That is, one might take the view that Jesus did preach a sermon like the SM to the Nephites, but that the text of the sermon as it appears in the Book of Mormon is at least partially dependent on the text of the SM in Matthew.

1.3 Hypotheses to Be Tested

Given the possibility that the ST in the Book of Mormon might be completely dependent, partially dependent, or not at all dependent on the SM in Matthew, there are three scenarios that are hypothetically conceivable. As it turns out, each of these three views has been advocated by some researchers into the origins of the Book of Mormon. Therefore, there are three hypotheses to be considered regarding the question of the historical authenticity of the ST:

1. *Literal translation view*: Jesus did in fact visit the Nephites and preach the ST to them, just as the Book of Mormon recounts. This is the traditional and still overwhelmingly preferred LDS view defended, most notably, by John Welch (see especially Welch 1990; 1999).

2. *Non-literal historical view*: Jesus did visit the Nephites and preach to them, perhaps touching on much the same themes as the SM, but the wording and at least some of the content of the ST derives from the English KJV text of the SM in Matthew. Blake Ostler advanced this idea in a notable article (Ostler 1987, 78-79, 114), and Brant Gardner's commentary on the Book of Mormon developed this view in detail (Gardner 2007, 5:396-472).

3. *Modern apocrypha view*: Jesus did not visit the Nephites, who did not exist; the ST is a nineteenth-century adaptation of the SM to fit the storyline and message of the Book of Mormon, which is itself a nineteenth-century creation. This is the view taken by some liberal or dissident Mormon scholars (e.g., Larson 1986; 1993) and by outside critics of the Book of Mormon (e.g., Stendahl 1978; Huggins 1997).

This study does not assume that all of the evidence must support only one hypothesis. Rather, the goal of this study is to determine and show which hypothesis *best* accounts for the available evidence. The thesis advanced and argued in this study is that *the preponderance of the evidence shows that the ST is a nineteenth-century fictive adaptation of the SM from the Gospel of Matthew in the KJV*.

1.4 Research Questions

The critical, central issue of relevance to the problem of the historical authenticity of the ST is its relationship to the SM. Nine key questions will guide this research, with the answers to these questions providing the evidence against which to test the three competing hypotheses. Each of these questions pertains to the relationship between the ST and the SM, and each in some way concerns either differences or similarities between the two texts.

1. What is the current state of scholarship with respect to the ST in the Book of Mormon, especially as it relates to critical examination of its claims to historical authenticity through a comparison with the SM in Matthew? As has already been noted, three major hypotheses or views are currently advocated by various LDS and non-LDS scholars as to the historical authenticity of the ST and its relationship to the SM. In the next chapter, academic literature on the ST will be reviewed in order to describe these views in detail and as a way of introducing the methodological issues relevant to the research problem. The remainder of the research questions listed here express the sorts of considerations one would expect such critical literature to evaluate. The review of the literature will show that some of these questions have received some attention in respect to certain details, but that no comprehensive study exists that addresses the research problem in all these respects.

2. What sort of text—and more specifically, what sort of "translation"—does the Book of Mormon purport to be, and what evidence external to the ST is there of relevance to this question? The question is an important one because it affects how one assesses the specific similarities and differences between the ST and the SM. As shall become clear, Mormons themselves have differing views as to what sort of translation the Book of Mormon is. Some understanding of this issue is necessary if the relevance of any detailed comparisons between the ST and the SM is to be properly explained.

3. To what extent is the SM (and the ST) rooted in what may be presumed to have been shared knowledge of both the Jews and Nephites? Such shared knowledge might have been of two types. The first type is knowledge of concepts or things universal in most or all cultures, times, and places (such

as mothers and fathers, light and darkness, good and evil). The second is knowledge of Old Testament (OT) motifs and language that would have predated 600 BC and so would have been available to the Nephites as well as to the people of Galilee. If most of the similarities between the two sermons can be explained in these ways, the credibility of the ST as an ancient New World sermon would be greatly enhanced.

4. To what extent does the ST reflect the setting or context for the SM in Old World, Second Temple Judaism (i.e., roughly 520 BC to AD 70), and if so, to what extent would these features (individually or collectively) be likely to be out of place in the supposed Nephite setting of the ST? This question arises from the fact that in the Book of Mormon narrative, the Nephites are descendants of Jews who had left the Middle East about 600 BC and so had no contact with Second Temple Judaism. It will therefore be necessary to examine ways in which the SM reflects the religious, political, geographical, and cultural context of Judaism toward the end of the Second Temple era, and then to take notice of the extent to which the ST retains these distinct contextual aspects of the SM.

5. To what extent do shared features of the two texts likely originate from Jesus himself, and to what extent do shared features reflect Matthew's role as author, editor, or redactor of the SM in his Gospel? To put the question another way, is the SM in any sense a composition of Matthew, and if so, how does one account for the nearly identical composition appearing in the Book of Mormon as the ST? This question arises in part because of the different way that material parallel to that in the SM in Matthew is situated and worded in the Gospel of Luke. There are also elements of the SM that scholars typically identify as Matthean in wording, independent of one's views on the literary relationship between Matthew and Luke. This research study will therefore need to give some consideration to these source-critical and redaction-critical issues.

6. To what extent are the verbal similarities between the SM as it appears in the KJV and the ST in the Book of Mormon traceable to the KJV itself, rather than to Jesus, Matthew, or any other ancient source?

7. Are there any differences between the two texts that one would not reasonably expect between them, given the assumption that Jesus preached what is basically the same sermon to the Nephites?

8. Are there any differences between the two texts that would count as evidence in support of the authenticity of the ST? Such evidence might be positive or negative. Positive evidence would be textual elements that reflect knowledge of ancient texts, cultures, etc., unavailable to Joseph Smith or any other plausible early nineteenth-century author. Negative evidence would be omission from the ST of Old World contextual elements that would be out of place in its New World setting (especially elements that one would not expect Joseph Smith to know would be out of place).

9. Where the two texts differ, can one plausibly account for these differences in terms of the knowledge basis of Joseph Smith's early nineteenth-century context? That is, to what extent do the ST's differences from the SM in the KJV reflect religious, theological, or ethical ideas distinctive to Joseph Smith's cultural setting or that are traceable to his active involvement in the production of the Book of Mormon text?

1.5 Design of the Study

The primary research tools or methods of this study are those of biblical studies, especially Gospel studies--specifically textual criticism, source criticism, redaction criticism, and socio-cultural interpretation. Secondarily, this research includes work in historical theology, in studying the nineteenth-century religious and cultural context of the 1830 publication of the Book of Mormon. Examples of secondary literature utilizing these methods in the study of the ST have already been mentioned (see §1.1.3 above). A more detailed review of the use of these methods in past studies of direct relevance to the research problem is presented in chapter 2. The proper assumptions and uses of these methods are discussed in chapter 3.

This research has been designed as a comparative study of literary texts, primarily the ST and the SM. The study examines and compares the two sermons as whole texts in their respective contexts as well as the individual, parallel units (*pericopes*) of these two texts, focusing on the nine key questions identified above, and synthesizes the results. For sake of completeness, this comparison also refers

as appropriate to the SM in the Joseph Smith Translation (JST), Smith's later revision of the KJV.

The specific method of the research proceeds according to these steps:

1. ***Thorough survey of the secondary literature on the ST***. The purpose of this step is to determine more specifically and precisely the issues involved and to come to some understanding of the methods and assumptions that will guide the research.

2. ***Study of the two primary texts in their respective contexts***. This means examining the SM as a whole in its context in Matthew and in the broader canonical context of the Bible, then doing the same for the ST as a whole in its context in 3 Nephi and in the broader context of the Book of Mormon. This step includes study of introductory critical issues (author, date, sources) for both Matthew and the Book of Mormon. The examination of the SM in its context directly pertains to assessing the various views that Mormon and non-Mormon scholars have advanced concerning its distinctive or specific genre, purpose, or theme. It is therefore necessary in this part of the research to interact with current scholarship on Matthew and especially on the SM.

3. ***Careful examination and comparison of these parallel texts***. Fundamental to this study is a close comparison of the differences as well as the similarities between the SM and the ST in order to shed some light on the relationship between the two English texts. In this step, the arguments in the secondary literature, both Mormon and non-Mormon, concerning the authenticity of the ST are evaluated. Again, this critical assessment focuses on answering one or more of the nine key questions previously identified.

4. ***Synthesis of the findings***. This synthesis consists of correlating the findings of the study with regard to the origins, contexts, and differences and similarities between the two parallel Sermons, developing a coherent explanation of those findings. This synthesis is the basis of the study's conclusion with regard to which of the three hypotheses best accounts for all of the evidence.

Certain limitations are observed in order to keep this study focused on the research problem. This study does not consider all of the possible evidence for or against Joseph Smith's claim to be a prophet of God. In fact, this study does not concern itself with that question except insofar as a conclusion regarding the historicity of the ST in the Book of Mormon arguably has implications for that question. Nor does this study consider *all* of the possible evidence for or against the historicity of the Book of Mormon. On the other hand, some attention is given to more global issues of authenticity and historicity with regard to the Book of Mormon as a whole, since one's view of the whole, whether favourable or unfavourable, is likely to influence one's view of the part. Such global issues are given attention especially as they inform one's view of the ST, the specific part of the Book of Mormon that is the focus of this study.

1.6 Value of the Study

In an article published in 1998, two evangelical students at Biola University warned that evangelicals were losing the apologetic battle with Latter-day Saints and did not even realize it. Carl Mosser and Paul Owen drew attention in particular to LDS academic scholarship defending the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Their conclusion was that LDS scholars "are producing serious research which desperately needs to be critically examined from an informed evangelical perspective" (Mosser and Owen 1998, 189).

Well over a decade later, very little has been done to address this glaring need. In 2002 Mosser and Owen co-edited with Francis Beckwith a collection of essays addressing Mormon scholarship, including just two chapters on the Book of Mormon (Beckwith, Mosser, and Owen 2002, 334-96). Ron Huggins, as mentioned earlier, has written a couple of periodical articles that address specific points of contention with regard to the Book of Mormon (Huggins 1997; 2003). Hardly any other examples of serious, academic, evangelical engagement with LDS Book of Mormon scholarship exists.

The value of this study lies not only in the possibility of developing a cogent critique of one particular part of the Book of Mormon, but in establishing a paradigm for a methodologically rigorous evangelical approach to meeting the challenge of Book of Mormon apologetics. The inclusion of Matthew 5-7 in the Book of Mormon

presents an excellent case study because different critical methods—textual criticism and source criticism being just two of the most obvious—show promise of relevance to the subject. Yet evangelicals have their own internal controversies regarding the applicability of such critical methods to the Bible. Shall evangelicals apply methods to the Book of Mormon that they would not allow to be applied to the Bible? This question, which will come into focus in chapter 3 of this study, is raised here as an example of the potential this study has not only for dealing with the Book of Mormon but also for advancing evangelical understanding of issues pertaining to the interpretation and defence of the authentic and true Scripture, the Bible.

1.7 Outline of the Study

This dissertation is structured in keeping with the research design already summarized. It begins with a review of secondary literature on the ST (chap. 2) and an exposition and defence of what is here called an evangelical critical methodology for the study of the Book of Mormon (chap. 3). That methodology is then applied in the rest of the dissertation to a study of the ST and its relation to the SM.

In order to put the SM in its proper context, introductory critical issues pertaining to the Gospel of Matthew are treated. These issues include Matthew's text and language, physical contexts (geographical, historical, etc.), use of the OT, and sources, specifically in relation to the other Synoptic Gospels. It is argued that the text of the Gospel of Matthew has been reliably preserved, that its narrative is grounded in the real-world context of the historical Jesus, and that the author used both Mark and a source also used by Luke in composing the Gospel (chap. 4).

On the basis of these findings, the SM is examined in detail. Relevant textual variants are identified and discussed as a necessary prelude to considering the text of the ST. The relationship of the SM to the Lukan "Sermon on the Plain" (SP) is considered in great detail, since as is shown later the ST in the Book of Mormon consistently follows the SM rather than the SP. It is shown that the SM and the SP are two different versions of Jesus' historical Galilean sermon, and that Matthew had expanded on that sermon by incorporating into the SM sayings of Jesus from other occasions. The result was that the SM reflected Matthew's compositional hand in selecting, arranging, editing, and wording those sayings into a coherent discourse. Finally, LDS scholar John Welch's temple-centred view of the SM is examined and

critiqued. That theory proposes that the ST shows that the theme of the temple constitutes a long-lost hermeneutical key to the SM. Welch's theory is important here because of its implication that the ST reveals esoteric meaning in the SM that would have been far beyond Joseph Smith. Thus, this part of the study concludes by arguing that the temple is not the defining or controlling motif of the SM (chap. 5).

The dissertation then turns to the Book of Mormon, treating the same sorts of introductory critical issues pertaining to its text, language, origins, physical contexts, and use of the Bible as were treated in chapter 3 with regard to Matthew. It is argued in this chapter that scepticism is warranted, apart from any naturalistic or question-begging assumptions, with regard to Joseph's claims that he translated the Book of Mormon from gold plates entrusted to him by an angel. It is further argued that the Book of Mormon does not appear to be translated from an ancient language text and that its narrative does not comport plausibly with the evidence available concerning the history and culture of ancient Mesoamerica, where almost all LDS scholars attempt to locate that narrative. Finally, it is shown that the Book of Mormon's extensive quotations from the OT are based directly on the KJV and that the Book of Mormon also makes heavy use of the NT (to which no Book of Mormon author could have had access) as found in the KJV. On the basis of these findings, a preliminary conclusion is drawn that the Book of Mormon is a modern fictive scripture composed in all likelihood by Joseph Smith himself (chap. 6).

The ST is then examined in detail as a test case that confirms the preliminary conclusion of chapter 6. The texts of the SM (in the KJV) and the ST are compared, showing that the latter is verbally dependent on the former. The ST is compared with both the SM and the Lukan SP, showing that the ST consistently follows the SM rather than the SP. The ST is compared to other sermons attributed to Jesus in 3 Nephi and to a sermon attributed to the sixth-century BC prophet Nephi. This comparison reveals that all of the speeches of Jesus in the Book of Mormon have the same author as the speech of Nephi except the ST, because it derives almost entirely from Matthew. By far the most attention in the chapter is given to close examination of the differences and the similarities between the ST and the SM. This examination demonstrates that despite some significant changes in particular to the material in Matthew 5, the ST is not plausibly adapted to its supposed Nephite culture in the Americas, but pervasively reflects the religious, political, and cultural

context of Jews under Roman rule in first-century Palestine. Finally, the use of the SM in the Book of Mormon is compared to the way the SM is incorporated into two influential apocryphal gospels—the medieval Gospel of Barnabas and the modern Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ—showing that the Book of Mormon is typical of apocryphal, unhistorical scriptures (chap. 7).

The dissertation concludes with a review of the study's findings, an assessment of the three hypotheses about the ST in the light of those findings, comments on the significance of the issue, and suggestions for future research.

1.8 Editions of the Bible and LDS Scriptures Used in This Study

The default English version of the Bible quoted in this study is the English Standard Version (ESV), though the King James Version (KJV), specifically the 1769 edition, is also frequently quoted because of the Book of Mormon's relationship to that version. Quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures or Hebrew Old Testament (OT) come from the electronic BibleWorks 9.0 edition of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Quotations from the Septuagint (LXX), also known as the Old Greek, which includes both the Greek translation of the OT and the Greek text of the Jewish Apocrypha, come from the BibleWorks 9.0 edition of Rahlfs's *Septuaginta* (Rahlfs 1935). English quotations of the LXX unless otherwise noted are taken from the New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS; Pietersma and Wright eds. 2009). The default Greek text of the New Testament (NT) quoted in this study is the BibleWorks 9.0 version of the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland text (NA27), the same text used in the 4th edition of the United Bible Societies' Greek NT. There is a 28th edition of the Nestle-Aland text, but its wording is identical in the Gospels to NA27.

Quotations and citations from the Book of Mormon and other LDS scriptures, except as noted, are taken from the LDS Church's official website, which includes the most current editions of those scriptures (http://lds.org/scriptures?lang=eng). A major exception is that the exegetical study of the ST in chapter 7 of this study is based on the first, 1830 edition as corrected by comparisons with the Printer's manuscript (see §6.2.4 for a detailed discussion of the editions of the Book of Mormon). Front matter to print editions of the Book of Mormon (e.g., Book of Mormon 2013) is not paginated.

2 THE SERMON AT THE TEMPLE IN PREVIOUS RESEARCH

2.1 Purpose and Limitations of the Review

The first chapter identified three main hypotheses concerning the historicity of the ST to be tested in this study: the literal translation, non-literal historical, and modern apocrypha views. It also set forth nine research questions that are directly relevant to the research problem of determining which of those three hypotheses best accounts for all the evidence.

This chapter addresses the first research question, having to do with the current state of scholarship on the ST, by reviewing the academic literature on the subject. This review will reveal how various authors articulate and defend each of the three hypotheses, and specifically how they answer the other eight research questions. The purpose of this review is not to catalogue all of the specific textual interpretations and arguments put forward in the literature, but to identify the major issues to be explored, to highlight a sampling of the kinds of specific issues and claims to be examined, and to introduce key methodological aspects of the discussion.

2.2 Non-Critical Study of the Sermon at the Temple

Although serious academic discussion of the ST did not begin until the 1970s, LDS writers published several thoughtful articles on issues pertaining to part of all of the ST earlier in the twentieth century (notably Roberts 1904; 1905; Brookbank 1910; Bond 1921; Sperry 1967, 99-112). The scholarship of Hugh Nibley (1910-2005) on the Book of Mormon (see especially Nibley 1988a, 1988b, 1988c, 1989) had enormous influence on the development of LDS scholarship in general and Book of Mormon studies in particular (cf. Midgley 1990), and is therefore worth noting even though he wrote little on the ST per se (though see Nibley 1978).

There are three significant commentaries that reflect traditional LDS understanding of the ST and the SM and that should briefly be noted here. The first of these is a seven-volume commentary on the Book of Mormon based on some writings of LDS general authority George Reynolds (1842-1909) and an unfinished commentary by LDS writer Janne M. Sjödahl (1853-1939). Sjödahl's son-in-law Philip C. Reynolds edited these materials together into a finished work, which includes significant comments on the ST (Reynolds and Sjödahl 1955, 7:146-59). According to the authors, Jesus gave basically the same sermon to the Nephites as he did to the Jews because its teachings were both perfect and universal, "adapted to the wants of all peoples" (7:146).

A second "pre-critical" commentary of importance was Bruce McConkie's three-volume commentary on the New Testament, which includes fairly detailed comments on the SM (McConkie 1965, 211-55). McConkie (1915-1985) was a general authority and later an apostle of the LDS Church, best known for his frank (and therefore somewhat controversial) dictionary and handbook of LDS topics, *Mormon Doctrine* (McConkie 1966). According to McConkie, a comparison of the SM with the ST as well as Joseph Smith's Inspired Version of the Bible shows that the SM was a whole sermon delivered by Jesus and that "the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain are one and the same." Yet McConkie also described each of the three accounts as "abridgments" (McConkie 1965, 214-15). McConkie denied that the doxology ending in the traditional text of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:13) was a later addition to the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray. The fact that the doxology appears in the Book of Mormon version of the prayer (3 Ne. 13:13) makes it "evident" that Jesus actually said those words (237). The Book of Mormon also clarifies that Jesus' instructions not to be concerned about food or clothing (Matt. 6:25-34; 3 Ne. 13:25-34) were not meant for all people but only for those called to missionary service, who while so engaged are temporarily "to have no concern about business enterprises or temporal pursuits" (243). Christ's directive not to cast pearls before swine (Matt. 7:6; 3 Ne. 14:6) means that deeper truths such as "the sacred teachings revealed in temple ordinances" are not to be presented to those who have not demonstrated "sufficient stability and background to understand them" (248-49).

The third commentary of note, though quite recent, almost completely ignored critical questions about the ST (Nyman 2003, 147-222). This is all the more surprising because its author, Monte S. Nyman, was a scripture professor at BYU. His commentary is largely a theological and religious exposition, drawing extensively on quotations from Joseph Smith's modern revelations in the LDS scripture called Doctrine & Covenants (e.g., Nyman 2003, 155-57, 159-61), Joseph's other sermons (e.g., 154-55, 161-64), and occasionally the writings of other LDS teachers.

According to Nyman, "the Sermon on the Mount was the higher law promised to replace the law of Moses" (147). Where the biblical SM lacks certain statements found in the ST, Nyman suggests that the "great and abominable church" (1 Ne. 13:26-27) had corrupted the text (151, quoting 1 Ne. 13:26-27). Making a similar point as McConkie had in his New Testament commentary, Nyman notes that the ST includes a statement specifying that the instructions about not giving any thought to tomorrow's food or clothing were given only to the Twelve and apply only to those serving in an evangelistic mission (Nyman 2003, 201-208).

Where the ST in the Book of Mormon lacks something in the SM, on the other hand, Nyman offers a theological explanation in defence of the ST. For example, he suggests that the ST omits the line "Give us this day our daily bread" from the Lord's Prayer (3 Ne. 13:10) "to show that the prayer was not a set prayer" or perhaps because the Nephites did not need to be reminded to trust God for their material needs. Nyman admits, "These are conjectures at best" (196).

Academic treatments of the ST since the 1970s have focused on its relationship to the SM and on understanding the theological or religious significance of the Sermon in its Book of Mormon context. The LDS Church actually recognizes two versions of Matthew's SM: the version found in the KJV and that found in Joseph Smith's revision of the KJV. That revision was often called the Inspired Version but today is commonly cited as the Joseph Smith Translation (JST).

2.3 Krister Stendahl: 3 Nephi's "Targumic" and "Johannine" Expansion of the Sermon on the Mount

In March 1978, Harvard NT scholar Krister Stendahl delivered a paper at the Religious Studies Center Symposium at BYU (Stendahl 1978). "As a biblical

scholar," Stendahl commented, "it would be awkward" for him not to apply the same methods used in biblical scholarship to 3 Nephi (Stendahl 1978, 140).

Employing these methods, Stendahl found that 3 Nephi exhibits characteristics of "apocryphal and pseudepigraphic material" (Stendahl 1978, 141), especially the "tendency" of such works "toward interpretive and clarifying expansion" (144). He referred to such interpretive expansions as "targumic" or "targumizing," an analogy with the Aramaic expanded paraphrases of the OT known as the Targums (144). As an example, Stendahl cited the addition of the words "filled with the Holy Ghost" to the fourth Beatitude (3 Ne. 12:6, cf. Matt. 5:6), which he pointed out do not fit the usage of the Greek word in Matthew but do seem to fit the English word "filled." According to Stendahl, this expansion of the fourth Beatitude illustrates "the fact that the form in which the biblical material has shaped the mind of Joseph Smith (be it consciously, unconsciously, or subconsciously) is that of the King James Version" (Stendahl 1978, 142). The Book of Mormon "can best be understood in its details and as a total phenomenon on the basis of the King James Version" (143).

Stendahl also pointed to a number of features in the ST that he argued reflect a more "Johannine Jesus" than is found in the SM in Matthew, such as the abundant use of "verily" (Stendahl 1978, 143, 145). The ST, he explained, is more Johannine because it presents Jesus as the object of faith rather than as the teacher of righteousness. For example, Jesus' teaching about leaving one's gift at the altar to go seek reconciliation with a brother (Matt. 5:23-24) is edited and expanded to become a directive to seek such reconciliation before coming to Jesus (3 Ne. 12:23-24). "Thus the simple teaching of Jesus about reconciliation in the community, which has no Christological note, has now become absorbed in the pervasively Christ-centered pattern of 3 Nephi" (145). In the Synoptics, Jesus speaks about the kingdom, not about himself; in John, Jesus' teaching is "transposed" into teaching about Jesus—and Stendahl finds the same phenomenon in 3 Nephi (150-51).

According to Stendahl, there is an "implicit rationalism" in some of the "targumic" expansions of the SM in the ST, such as the rewriting of Jesus' sayings about cutting off one's hand or plucking out one's eye rather than commit sin (Stendahl 1978, 145; see 3 Ne. 12:29-30, cf. Matt. 5:27-30). He also suggests that the SM is "dehistoricized" by omissions of such specific geographical and cultural

elements as Jerusalem, altar, and temple. Such changes sometimes disrupt the style of the SM sayings, as in the omission of the second line of a two-line parallelism in Matthew 5:45 (cf. 3 Ne. 12:45; Stendahl 1978, 146).

Stendahl gives extended attention to the omissions of "Thy kingdom come" and "Give us this day our daily bread" from the version of the Lord's Prayer that appears in 3 Nephi 13:9-13. He suggests that the former omission may reflect a belief that the kingdom of God had already become present, while the latter omission may reflect a de-emphasis of "material things" in the Book of Mormon (Stendahl 1978, 147-49).

Stendahl also highlights the omission of references to the scribes and Pharisees, which removes the offense of the Gospels' use of the Pharisees as a symbol of religious hypocrisy but at the high cost of obliterating "one of the most significant elements in the synoptic image of Jesus," his "persistent critique of the foibles of religious people" (Stendahl 1978, 151).

In his concluding remarks, Stendahl states that he has applied the same methods to the Book of Mormon as those used in biblical criticism. These methods reveal "that the Book of Mormon belongs to and shows many of the same signs of the Targums and pseudepigraphic recasting of biblical material" (152). The Book of Mormon exhibits "one of the striking tendencies in pseudepigraphic literature," the desire for further revelation that answers questions left unanswered by earlier texts or that fills in gaps of knowledge. "The apocryphal and pseudepigraphic writings, when looked at from the outside, are driven by this *horror vacui*. The gaps of knowledge have to be filled in somehow" (Stendahl 1978, 152). From the inside, one may view this desire as "an authentic need, authentically filled by revelations and by religious geniuses," a need that various other religious leaders from Emanuel Swedenborg to Mary Baker Eddy to Reverend Moon have also claimed to meet (153).

2.4 William Russell v. Don Sorenson: Biblical Criticism and the Sermon on the Mount in the Book of Mormon

An early critical article of note that discusses the ST was written by William D. Russell, a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (RLDS), a smaller offshoot of Joseph Smith's religion that accepted his son Joseph

Smith III as his true successor rather than Brigham Young, under whom the LDS Church became based in Salt Lake City. (The RLDS Church officially changed its name in 2000 to the Community of Christ.) Russell's article originally appeared in *Sunstone*, a liberal LDS magazine (Russell 1982), and was later reprinted in a RLDS collection of essays (Russell 1983).

Russell opens his article by arguing that Mormons (meaning both LDS and RLDS believers) need to rethink their assumptions about the Book of Mormon. "I think it is time we subject the Book of Mormon to serious inquiry and revise our assertions about the book if our findings require it" (Russell 1982, 20).

The main problem with the ST is the fact that it is so close in content and wording to the SM in the Gospel of Matthew, which "is generally dated about 40 to 70 years after Jesus' crucifixion." Russell argues that it is highly improbable "that Christ would have delivered a sermon in the New World which so closely paralleled the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew." Jesus' teachings were preserved for four decades through a process in which "there were various traditions about Jesus that circulated orally as independent units…. The author of each synoptic gospel pieced together his own account from such sources." Matthew and Luke drew some of their material (including the material found in the SM in Matthew) from a common source that scholars call Q, which each Gospel writer selected and arranged for his own purposes. According to Russell, both Matthew and Luke were somewhat dissatisfied with Mark's Gospel, reordering and revising the material they took from that work as well as adding new material from other sources (Russell 1982, 24).

The SM in Matthew 5-7, Russell explains, is one of five blocks of teaching material in Matthew representing "collections of Jesus' teachings" and arranged by Matthew in five blocks (corresponding to the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses) in order to portray Jesus as a "new Moses." The sayings grouped together in Matthew and delivered by Jesus on a mountaintop are scattered in Luke's Gospel, with the largest parallel unit of teaching material presented on a plain (Russell 1982, 25). If the sayings in the SM derive from Jesus, it is possible that he would repeat them to the Nephites, but it is "highly improbable" that he would do so in the same arrangement that Matthew later used (Russell 1982, 25). This improbability is exacerbated by the fact that the ST follows the wording of the KJV as closely as it

does. The reason this is so unlikely is that the KJV was "a very imperfect translation," the deficiencies of which have become clear through advances in the knowledge of ancient Greek and the discovery of many Greek manuscripts of the New Testament (Russell 1982, 25).

Furthermore, one would think that if Jesus were to appear in the Americas and preach to the Nephites, even if he wanted to present much the same ideas as are found in the SM, he would have contextualized his message more than the Book of Mormon reports. "Wouldn't Jesus have shaped his sermon to the cultural setting of his hearers in the New World, which is what he did in the Old? Why would he use the same illustrations that had been used originally in a different cultural setting?" (Russell 1982, 25).

As Russell sees it, Mormons coming to terms with such problems is no different in principle with Christians in general coming to terms with the findings of biblical criticism with regard to traditional assumptions about the Bible. The biblical stories of the parting of the Red Sea, the Ten Commandments, Daniel, Jonah, and Esther all have truths to teach that do not "depend upon their being actual historical events (Russell 1982, 26). Even the Gospels, Russell suggests, "need not be regarded as always accurate historically." Just as they not need "accept uncritically nearly nineteen centuries of traditions about the Bible," Mormons can affirm the value of the Book of Mormon as scripture without mistakenly viewing it as historical narrative (Russell 1982, 26).

Despite the fact that Russell was RLDS and that his article was published in 1982, the article apparently still seemed significant enough that in 2010 *FARMS Review*, a leading LDS periodical defending the Book of Mormon and other LDS scriptures, published a review article by Kevin Christensen critiquing Russell's arguments. Christensen complains that Russell ignored the considerable body of LDS scholarship defending the historicity of the Book of Mormon, notably the writings of Hugh Nibley (Christensen 2010, 159-61). With regard to Russell's specific arguments pertaining to the ST, however, Christenson cites John Welch's book on the ST (161-62), written after Russell's article (Welch 1990; 1999), about which much more will be said below. Christensen also cites a 1984 seminar paper by Don Sorenson that responded to Russell's arguments but that was not published until 2004 (Christenson 2010, 161).

According to Sorenson, the conclusion that Jesus did not deliver the SM as it reads in Matthew does not follow from some of the basic premises that Russell draws from conventional Gospel scholarship. For example, one might affirm Markan priority and Q and yet also hold that the SM as it appears in Matthew was already present in that form in Q. "It does not follow that parts of the sermon existed independently simply because parts of Matthew existed independently before it was written" (D. Sorenson 2004, 121). Sorenson also points out that these views about the origins of the Gospels are more controversial than Russell admits (121-22).

Sorenson acknowledges that if Russell's view of the oral-tradition period preceding the composition of the Gospels is correct it would pose a serious objection to the presence in the Book of Mormon of a sermon almost identical to one in Matthew. However, according to Sorenson, Russell's view presupposes a "fluid-tradition theory" as opposed to a "controlled-tradition theory" (D. Sorenson 2004, 123-24). The former theory hypothesizes that the sayings of Jesus originally circulated as independent units of oral tradition and that the Gospel writers collected and arranged these independent units in whatever way they thought best. The controlled-tradition theory, represented particularly by Birger Gerhardsson (1961; 1964; 1979), maintains that "Jesus and his followers belonged to a culture with a tradition, deeply rooted, of preserving sacred texts in word-perfect form" (D. Sorenson 2004, 124). Sorenson admits that the fluid-tradition view dominated Gospel scholarship but points out that even some advocates of that view regard such questions as the Synoptic problem "unsettled" (125-26). In any case, Sorenson is confident that "according to the Book of Mormon, a version of the controlled-tradition theory is true" (127-28). Any form of the fluid-tradition view rests on the same anti-supernatural or naturalistic assumption that pervades works of conventional Gospel criticism, as exemplified for his purposes by a work of Eugene Boring (1982; D. Sorenson 2004, 127-39).

In his concluding remarks, Sorenson suggests a divine reason for the inclusion of the SM in the Book of Mormon. By preaching the same sermon to the Nephites as he had to the Galileans, "Jesus did the perfect thing, in view of New Testament scholarship, to falsify the fluid-tradition theory and confirm a controlled-tradition view of his sayings" (D. Sorenson 2004, 141). In other words, God anticipated the rise of modern Gospel criticism, had Jesus deliver the SM to the

Nephites, and had Mormon preserve it in writing in the Book of Mormon, so that modern readers of the Book of Mormon would know that the Gospels reliably communicate the words of Jesus after all.

2.5 Robert Cloward: The Sermon as a Missionary Training Sermon

Robert Cloward is a Mormon scholar who wrote a number of articles on the Book of Mormon, typically focusing on its relationship to the Bible, in the 1980s and 1990s. Perhaps his most significant article was a comparison of the SM in the JST and of the ST (Cloward 1985). Cloward argued that the JST and ST both make "major contributions" to the understanding of the SM as it traditionally appears in the KJV. The JST restores material lost from the Sermon that reveal its Christ-centred, gospel focus and clarifies its purpose to be "instructions for missionaries and ministers in the kingdom" (164). The Book of Mormon clarifies which elements of the Sermon were intended for all hearers and which applied only to those engaged in full-time ministry (165). "Only in the JST and the Book of Mormon do we learn that the beginning of the Sermon is an unmistakable call to missionary *labors*" (170). Cloward proceeded section by section through the Sermon, comparing the KJV, JST, and Book of Mormon versions, and arguing that the JST and ST clarify the true meaning and significance of the SM. Cloward also pointed to features of the ST that are consistent with Jesus delivering it to the Nephites following his resurrection, such as the omission of any reference to the scribes and Pharisees (177).

In a later essay, Cloward developed his view of the nature of the SM and the ST. He rejected the majority scholarly view that Matthew gathered together the sayings of Jesus in the SM and gave the Sermon its structure or frame. This view is contradicted by the statement of Jesus after presenting the same sermon to the Nephites that he had taught the same things before his ascension (3 Ne. 15:1). This means "that both the teachings and their frame were the Savior's own and not the literary work of the evangelist Matthew" (Cloward 1993, 121). The SM and the ST "are not a literary collection of Jesus' sayings" but "are best interpreted as *missionary training sermons*" (122).

Agreeing with Bruce McConkie that the Sermon on the Plain (hereafter *SP*) in Luke 6:20-49 is simply "Luke's version of the same sermon as Matthew 5-7," Cloward pointed out that the SP immediately follows "the call of the Twelve" in Luke

6:13-16 (Cloward 1993, 123). In the Book of Mormon, Jesus delivers the ST shortly after commissioning the Nephite Twelve to "go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth" (3 Ne. 11:41). The JST version of the SM includes the commissioning words "Go ye into all the world" (Matt. 6:25-26 JST). These and other contextual clues show that the Sermon that Jesus delivered in both hemispheres was focused on the work of missionaries (Cloward 1993, 123-28).

Cloward then proceeded to review the ST and show how missionary training is the purpose that unifies the Sermon. The Beatitudes describe "the effect of the gospel on people the missionaries would encounter" (Cloward 1993, 128). Jesus' charge to the disciples to be salt and light was a charge to be missionaries (130). The missionaries were to preach that the Law had been fulfilled in Christ and to avoid hypocrisy in their religious activities (130-32). Jesus' instruction to take no thought about food and clothing applied specifically to full-time missionaries (133). The injunction against throwing pearls before swine meant that they were to withhold sacred things from the unworthy, just as Mormons today are taught to withhold some sacred things from unworthy people (133-34). Cloward concluded that the "diversity of topics" in the Sermon in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon "are bound together by a missionary training thread" (135).

2.6 Stan Larson v. John Welch: New Testament Textual Criticism and the Historicity of the Sermon at the Temple

The most significant academic exchange on the subject of the ST to date has focused on textual variants in the SM and their significance for the text of the ST. The opening move in this exchange was an article by Stan Larson, a former LDS scholar, published in the evangelical Protestant *Trinity Journal* (Larson 1986) and later revised for inclusion in a book of essays on the Book of Mormon (Larson 1993). According to Larson, the ST frequently follows an inferior textual reading reflected in the KJV, demonstrating the dependence of the ST on the KJV and its origin in modern times. Larson identified eleven such inferior readings in the ST in his 1986 article; he dropped three of these in his 1993 essay.

In 1990 a response to Larson's 1986 article was published by John W. Welch. His book *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* included

a chapter rebutting Larson's text-critical arguments against the historicity of the ST (Welch 1990, 145-63). According to Welch, Larson's eleven inferior textual variants in the ST are inconsequential because none of them are mistranslations of the actual meaning of the sermon. Welch also argued that the omission of "without a cause" in Jesus' saying about anger (Matt. 5:22; 2 Ne. 12:22) is a counter-instance to Larson's thesis, since in this text the ST departs from the KJV and follows a superior reading.

After Larson's revised article appeared in 1993 (with the number of inferior variants in the ST reduced from eleven to eight), Welch published a review article that included a new response to Larson (Welch 1994a, 152-68). Welch later repeated much of that material in a chapter of a revised version of his book on the ST, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount* (Welch 1999, 199-210).

The assumption from which Larson's study proceeded was that Jesus gave the same sermon on two different occasions—the SM and the ST—with such differences as were appropriate to the two different settings (Larson 1993, 116). On the basis of this premise, Larson proposed to use textual criticism to assess the historicity of the Book of Mormon report of Jesus preaching the sermon to the Nephites. Larson compared the text of the SM used in the KJV—essentially, the Textus Receptus (TR)—with ten modern critical editions of the Greek NT, including those of Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, von Soden, Nestle and Aland (26th ed.), Tasker, Merk, the UBS (3rd ed.), and others (Larson 1993, 119; cf. Larson 1986, 23-25). The purpose of the comparison was to find undeniable instances of the KJV deviating from the original Greek text of the SM and then to see in which of these instances the ST follows the KJV and in which instances it follows the original text. To establish such KJV readings as undeniable variants from the original reading, Larson required that all ten of the editions he used of the Greek text agree on the same original reading with no qualifications, including placing any words in brackets. The reading judged to be original "must also have support from the earliest and best Greek manuscripts, from each of the three earliest translations, and from a pre-Nicean patristic writer." On the basis of these criteria, Larson identified eight passages where the KJV undeniably follows an inferior variant (120).

An analysis of this data may lead, according to Larson, to any of three different conclusions. (1) Readings in the ST that differ from both the KJV and the earliest ancient manuscripts of the SM reveal nothing about the historicity of the ST, "since the Book of Mormon variation could be specific to its audience and setting in the New World." (2) Readings in the ST that agree with the earliest manuscripts against the KJV translation would be evidence in support of the historicity of the Book of Mormon as "a genuine translation of an ancient document." (3) Readings in the ST that agree with the KJV against the earliest manuscripts of the SM "would be strong evidence against its historicity" (Larson 1993, 117).

According to Larson, in all eight indisputable instances of the KJV following an inferior text of the SM (Matt. 5:27, 30, 44; 6:4, 6, 13, 18; 7:2), the ST follows the KJV (Larson 1993, 121-27). The most famous of these inferior readings is the doxological ending to the Lord's Prayer which is retained in the ST (Matt. 6:13; 3 Ne. 13:13). This is a particularly telling example because the Greek manuscripts of Matthew that do have a doxology have twelve variant forms of it, yet the ST follows the same form of the doxology found in the KJV (125-26).

Larson acknowledged that the ST does have one variant in which it departs from the KJV and "seems to receive ancient support." In Matthew 5:22, there is some support for omitting "without a clause" (Greek, *eikē*), which the KJV includes but the ST omits (3 Ne. 12:22). Larson denied that this reading meets his criteria because it is not certain that Matthew's text originally lacked the word. Larson pointed out that one of the ten critical editions (that of Augustinus Merk) prints *eikē* in brackets, that the omission is not supported by the Syriac or Coptic versions, that a text-critical case can be made for the inclusion of the word, and that the UBS edition gives the omission a "C" rating (Larson 1993, 127-28). Nevertheless, Larson admitted that based on the evidence he "would lean to the opinion that *eike* 'without a cause' was not originally at Matthew 5:22" (128). He suggested two possible explanations for the Book of Mormon having the more likely correct reading here: Joseph Smith may have learned about the omission from sources accessible to him such as the Methodist commentator Adam Clarke, or Joseph may have coincidentally chosen to omit the word "because it detracted from the strength of Jesus' command against anger" (129). Setting aside this coincidental agreement, "If the Book of Mormon were a genuinely ancient text, it would not always be expected

to side with what modern scholarship concludes is the original text, but certainly there ought to be some agreement" (129).

According to Larson, the agreements between the ST and the SM as it appears in the KJV show that the Book of Mormon was directly dependent on the KJV. He cited other evidence to corroborate this conclusion. The ST frequently deviates from the KJV precisely at points where the 1769 printing of the KJV had words printed in italics, yet fails to deviate from the KJV in some places where it should have done so. Thus, the ST drops italicized words in three places, changes the tense of an italicized verb in another place, but in two other places where the KJV incorrectly added "men" (and did so without the use of italics) the ST retains this incorrect addition (Larson 1993, 129-31). Larson concluded that this evidence shows that the Book of Mormon originated between 1769 and 1830 (131). This conclusion, he suggested, corroborates Stendahl's finding that the ST is Joseph Smith's "nineteenth-century targumic expansion of the English KJV" (Larson 1993, 131).

John Welch took issue both with some of the specifics of Larson's argument and with his assumptions and method. He suggested that modern manuscript discoveries and textual criticism actually provide a "high degree of confirmation" of the Textus Receptus that "speaks generally in favor of the Sermon at the Temple, for one could not wisely have gambled on such confirmation a century and a half ago" (Welch 1999, 199). He admitted that the Greek text followed by the KJV sometimes differed slightly from "what was apparently written in the original Gospel of Matthew," but asserted that these differences are so insignificant that they do not affect the essential meaning of the text (202).

Furthermore, Welch argued that Larson's argument wrongly assumed a simple relationship between the ST and the SM. Matthew provides a Greek translation of Jesus' Aramaic sermon in Galilee. There are different ways in Greek of rendering the same Aramaic wording, and Matthew's translation of Jesus' Aramaic might not have been a strictly word-for-word rendition. The Book of Mormon, on the other hand, gives "Mormon's transcription" of an earlier record of Jesus' sermon to the Nephites. There is therefore no reason to expect two English translations of these two texts to be verbally identical at any point. This means that textual criticism cannot be used to test the historicity of the Book of Mormon (Welch 1994a, 153-54).

Welch also suggested that since Jesus gave the SM and the ST to two different audiences, he may have used a different wording in the ST than he did in the SM. There are, after all, "substantial differences" between the two sermons unrelated to the text-critical data. "This point should be kept in mind, especially with respect to the different endings used in the Lord's Prayer: Jesus need not have ended every prayer the same way" (Welch 1994a, 154). Welch also argued that there are "many circumstantial reasons" to conclude that "Jesus probably pronounced a doxology of some kind at the end of his prayers" (Welch 1999, 206). He gave five such reasons with regard to the doxology in the ST: (1) the oddity of Jesus ending a prayer without praising God; (2) the temple setting of the ST where a doxology would be especially expected; (3) the traditional form of the doxology similar to 1 Chronicles 29:10-13; (4) the inclusion of doxologies in some early texts and versions of Matthew and in the Didache; and (5) the fact that the Lord's Prayer in the ST differs in other ways from the KJV (206-208). He admitted, however, that these considerations do not prove that the Lord's Prayer originally ended with the exact words found in the doxology in Matthew 6, but only that Jesus probably did include some sort of doxology at the end of the prayer (Welch 1994a, 162-63).

More recently, LDS scholar Thomas Wayment has acknowledged that "it can be tentatively concluded that the Lord's Prayer lacked the lacked the longer ending" and that the doxology was added later (Wayment 2010, 307). He pointed to the absence of the doxology in the Lukan version of the prayer as confirmation of this conclusion (309).

Welch argued that the manuscript support for the omission of "without a cause" in the ST (3 Ne. 12:22) is substantial enough that it should be acknowledged as an instance of the ST getting it right (Welch 1999, 200). He acknowledged that Matthew 5:22 technically does not meet Larson's criteria for consideration but "wonders if he has designed his criteria specifically to exclude this otherwise very close case" (Welch 1994a, 165). He further argued that this variant is the only one that significantly affects the meaning of the passage, since it makes Jesus' prohibition of anger so much more sweeping and severe (Welch 1999, 201). He admitted that one might have expected to see more such instances in the ST of agreement with the better Greek text against the KJV, but suggested that 3 Nephi 12:22 is the only place where such a departure from the KJV text was needed

(Welch 1990, 163). Wayment and other LDS scholars have echoed Welch's argument that by its omission of "without a cause" the Book of Mormon preserves an ancient and more accurate text of Jesus' sermon (Judd and Stoddard 2006; Wayment 2010, 300-301).

In his 1994 review article, Welch summarized his criticisms of Larson's arguments and concluded, "I am happy with a draw on this issue. The historicity of the Book of Mormon, in my opinion, has not been proved or disproved by Larson's eight examples" (Welch 1994a, 168). Emphasizing the evidence of the omission of "without a cause" in 3 Nephi 12:22, Welch went a little further in his later book: "The Greek manuscripts of the Sermon on the Mount do not discredit the Book of Mormon, and may on balance sustain it" (Welch 1999, 208).

In a later article, another scholar joined in the fray over the significance of the omission of "without a cause" in 3 Nephi 12:22. Ronald V. Huggins, an evangelical New Testament scholar, published an article in the LDS periodical *Dialogue* (Huggins 2003) in which he discussed how Joseph Smith might have come up with the correct reading for this verse and for another Book of Mormon quotation from the Bible that varies from the KJV ("ships of the sea" instead of "ships of Tarshish" in Isa. 2:16, quoted in 2 Ne. 12:16). After considering each of these texts in turn, Huggins asked whether Joseph might have had a single source for *both* corrections to the KJV. He suggested two such possible sources. The first was Martin Luther's German Bible, a copy of which was possessed by the Whitmer family, in whose home Joseph stayed for part of the time he was producing the Book of Mormon. Huggins argued that it was possible that the Whitmers at some point said something to Joseph about these variants in their German Bible (Huggins 2003, 168-69). The second and in Huggins's view more likely source was Joseph's considerable exposure to Methodism. Huggins documented that both readings were favoured not only by the Methodist commentator Adam Clarke but also by John Wesley himself in Wesley's authoritative commentary on the Bible, and could easily have "trickled down" to Joseph Smith (170-78).

2.7 Blake Ostler: The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source

In his article on "the Book of Mormon as a modern expansion of an ancient source," LDS attorney and philosopher Blake Ostler suggested a mediating view of the Book of Mormon between the opposing views that it is historical or non-historical. Ostler proposed that the Book of Mormon was neither "a pious fraud" nor a literal translation exclusively of an ancient book, but instead "Joseph Smith's expansion of an ancient work by building on the work of earlier prophets to answer the nagging problems of his day" (Ostler 1987, 66). Ostler used "the scholarly tools of source, motif and form-critical analyses" to support his theory (66).

According to Ostler, it is indisputable that the Book of Mormon used the KJV. It "adapts many phrases, particularly from the New Testament," and uses them in Book of Mormon passages predating the coming of Christ (76). It also quotes entire chapters from the writings of Isaiah and Malachi, which Ostler thinks may have been quoted in the ancient Book of Mormon source but are nevertheless quoted using the wording of the KJV (77-78). "The Book of Mormon also quotes the KJV Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5-7" (78). Ostler accepted Stendahl's analysis that the sermon in 3 Nephi 12-14 is based on the Matthean version in the KJV but has been reworked with Johannine stylistic and thematic elements (78). What this means is "that the Book of Mormon *as translated* and presented by Joseph Smith relied on the KJV and was influenced by nineteenth-century American culture in rendering its message" (79).

Ostler acknowledged that Mormons might find his theory objectionable. "Some may see the expansion theory as compromising the historicity of the Book of Mormon. To a certain extent it does." He assured them, however, that he was not denying the Book of Mormon's central historical claims, in particular the visit of Christ to the Nephites (Ostler 1987, 114).

2.8 Vernon Robbins: The Lord's Prayer in the Book of Mormon

One of the text-critical issues debated by Larson and Welch (see §2.6) received a sophisticated treatment in a more broadly hermeneutical analysis by Vernon K. Robbins, a religion scholar at Emory University specializing in socio-rhetorical criticism of the New Testament and related religious texts. In his article,

Robbins focused on the Lord's Prayer and its use in the Book of Mormon (Robbins 1995). Acknowledging that "it is unusual for a New Testament interpreter to include comments about the Book of Mormon in the context of commentary on a New Testament text," Robbins explained, "This is an omission that the methodology of socio-rhetorical criticism is designed to correct." He hoped with this analysis to encourage "people of faith to compare their own sacred texts with other people's sacred texts and to dialogue peaceably with other people about their beliefs" (125).

After some preliminaries, Robbins pointed out that modern manuscript discoveries and textual critical studies have shown that the differences between Matthew and Luke's versions of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-3) were far greater originally than is reflected in the KJV (Robbins 1995, 119-21). He argued that the Lord's Prayer, as a text, went through a number of historical stages of development that scholars can discern as "layers" that expanded the original prayer. The form of the Lord's Prayer in Luke is the shortest and closest to the original. Matthew expanded that version somewhat, and scribes expanded Luke's version to more closely match Matthew's while also expanding Matthew's version further by adding the doxology (121-23).

Robbins then turned his attention to the Lord's Prayer as it appears in the ST. Although the basic form of the prayer is Matthew's, the ST version omits two lines of the prayer—"Thy kingdom come" and "Give us this day our daily bread"—which gives the Book of Mormon version "a different nuance of emphasis" (Robbins 1995, 125). Robbins analysed the repetition of words in the different texts of the Lord's Prayer as a means of discovering their "inner texture." The Gospel texts of the prayer reveal a "repetitive-progressive texture" in which the prayer moves from "thy" petitions to "us/our" petitions (131). The omissions in the ST version give the prayer "even a greater emphasis on 'heaven'" as well as a greater emphasis on "our," and move the petitions concerning one's debts to others into the centre of the prayer (132-33).

Robbins agreed with Stendahl (1987, 147-48) that the Book of Mormon version of the Lord's Prayer "appears to presuppose that God's kingdom has already come on earth" (Robbins 1995, 137, 139). He argued that this explanation can give insight into the "social and cultural texture" of the text, which in turn provides a clue as to the reason for the omission of the petition for one's daily bread: rather than

depending on God to provide one's daily bread miraculously, believers should earn it by living responsibly in God's kingdom (Robbins 1995, 139-40). This interpretation of the two lines omitted from the Lord's Prayer in the ST support an understanding of that version as "countercultural," as "a portion of special revelation from God designed to aid the believer in living successfully in the world" (Robbins 1995, 143).

In a concluding section of his article, Robbins discussed the "ideological texture" of the three versions of the Lord's Prayer. Matthew's version "may advance the interests of followers of Jesus who want to be understood as a special 'group' within God's covenant who fulfills God's righteousness better than any other believers in the God of Israel," while Luke's version may emphasize the idea that God's people need to "carry God's message to all people" and so "does not accommodate traditional forms of speech in the synagogue" (Robbins 1995, 144). The Book of Mormon version blends the Matthean and Lukan emphases and retains their use of masculine imagery for God, which for Robbins raised troubling ideological questions about how the prayer will be used to shape how people think of God and what functions they are allowed to perform (145).

2.9 Ronald Huggins and John Welch: Synoptic Criticism and the Matthean Sermon on the Mount in the Book of Mormon

Huggins's article on textual variants in the Book of Mormon's use of the Bible (Huggins 2003, cf. §2.6 above) was not his first article dealing with the ST. In an earlier article, also published in *Dialogue*, Huggins had asked, "Did the author of 3 Nephi know the Gospel of Matthew?" (Huggins 1997). He began by pointing out that the material in Matthew's SM is arranged very differently in Luke, and the ST consistently follows Matthew's arrangement and order (137-38). The material is often verbally the same, but when the wording differs, again the ST is consistently closer to Matthew's wording than to Luke's, as in the Lord's Prayer (139-40).

The ST is presented in the Book of Mormon as "the retelling of an almost identical sermon in the New World which had already been delivered in Palestine and been preserved in Matthew" (Huggins 1997, 140). A serious problem for this understanding of the ST, however, is the fact that the SM is a composition in which Jesus' sayings have been drawn by Matthew from an earlier source and arranged in a distinctive way. The dominant theory is that Matthew and Luke both drew these

sayings from a common source called Q that predated both of their works (140-42). The theory that Luke used Matthew is untenable because it is inexplicable that Luke would, for example, break up the SM into several shorter passages or shorten the Lord's Prayer as it appears in Matthew (142-43). An alternative view that Huggins had defended earlier was that Matthew drew upon Luke for the sayings in the SM (Huggins 1992). But whether Matthew used Luke or both used Q, "it is clear that it was Matthew who aggressively restructured and expanded the traditional material that came into his hands in the interest of the design and message of his gospel" (Huggins 1997, 143). This means that Luke's arrangement of the sayings material was closer to the original setting and arrangement in Jesus' teaching and that "to a great extent the form and arrangement of the Matthean SOM [Sermon on the Mount] comes not from Jesus but from Matthew" (144).

This evidence from the source criticism of the Gospels, then, leads to the inference that the author of 3 Nephi did in fact know the Gospel of Matthew. Nephi, supposedly a first-century individual living in the New World, could not have known the Gospel of Matthew, but Joseph Smith could be and was familiar with it (Huggins 1997, 144-45). Huggins argued that this finding confirmed Larson's conclusion, based on text-critical study of the ST and SM, that the ST derived from the SM as it appears in the KJV (Larson 1986, cited in Huggins 1997, 145). While it is hypothetically possible that Jesus could have chosen and ordered his sayings for the Nephites in the form they would later take in the Gospel of Matthew, this is not a plausible explanation. "While 'anything is possible with God,' such an explanation makes a sham of all textual and source-critical studies" (Huggins 1997, 145-46).

Next, Huggins argued that the dependence of the ST on the SM as it appears in the KJV makes sense of specific differences between the ST and the SM. The ST uses the word *senine* in place of *farthing* (Matt. 5:26; 3 Ne. 12:26) "to introduce verisimilitude," by using a term appearing earlier in the Book of Mormon for a Nephite unit of currency (Huggins 1997, 146). Matthew's reference to "the scribes and Pharisees" (Matt. 5:20) is omitted in the ST (3 Ne. 12:20), not to avoid anti-Semitic sentiment (cf. Stendahl 1978, 151), but to avoid anachronism, because the Pharisees originated after the Nephites had left the Old World (Huggins 1997, 146-47). This also explains why the ST omits reference to "publicans" (3 Ne. 12:46-47, cf. Matt. 5:46-47). On the other hand, the Book of Mormon does not always avoid

such anachronisms, as in its reference to "synagogues" (3 Ne. 13:2, 5, cf. Matt. 6:2, 5), which arose after the Nephites left the Old World, or its use of the Aramaic words *raca* and *mammon* (3 Ne. 12:22; 13:24, cf. Matt. 5:22; 6:24; Huggins 1997, 147-48).

In conclusion, Huggins pointed out the obvious implications if the source-critical view that Matthew significantly shaped the material in the SM is correct. "If this assessment is correct, it is no longer possible to regard 3 Nephi 12-14 as a record of an actual sermon that was delivered before first-century Nephites by the resurrected Jesus, since Nephi could not have known Matthew" (Huggins 1997, 148).

A very different assessment of the source-critical issues was offered by John Welch in both editions of his book on the ST (Welch 1990, 164-77; Welch 1999, 211-37) and in a later book on the SM (Welch 2009, 211-17). (Huggins did not reference Welch's 1990 treatment in his 1997 article; nor did Welch reference Huggins's article in his 1999 revised chapter on the subject.) Welch acknowledged at the outset that those who accept the usual source-critical views of the Gospels are not likely to view Jesus as the author of the SM in its Matthean form (Welch 1999, 211-12).

Welch began his argument by pointing out that Jesus could have said everything found in the SM (Welch 1999, 212-13) before turning to the more difficult issue, the "very widely held opinion" that Matthew organized sayings of Jesus into the arrangement found in the SM. "The presence of this material in the Sermon at the Temple, however, commits the believing Latter-day Saint to doubt such a claim," since the Book of Mormon reports Jesus giving essentially the same sermon in the same form as in Matthew (Welch 1999, 213).

Welch agreed with Huggins, then, that conventional Synoptic source-critical views of the SM pose a serious problem for the ST. He proceeded, however, to question such source-critical views of the SM. Scholarly research on the Synoptic problem is, he argued, largely driven by "surmising, extrapolating, following hunches, and outright guesswork" (Welch 1999, 214). The relationships between the SM and the other Gospels are too complex to allow for conclusive results concerning the origin of the SM, explaining the lack of anything like a scholarly consensus on this issue (214-15). "Limited to the methods of critical biblical studies, I can no more

purport to prove that Matthew did not write the Sermon on the Mount than others can show that he did" (Welch 1990, 167).

Welch did find encouraging the theory of Hans Dieter Betz (1995) that the SM "was a composite of pre-Matthean sources" that "Matthew later incorporated into his Gospel" (Welch 1999, 215). In support of this theory, Welch argued that the vocabulary of the SM appears un-Matthean, noting that 19% of the words in the SM do not appear elsewhere in Matthew and that only two words in the SM (*Gehenna*, "hell," and *grammateis*, "scribes") are characteristically Matthean words (215-16).

Welch acknowledged that he would agree with standard Synoptic source-critical views "were it not for my acceptance of the material in the Book of Mormon" (Welch 1999, 216). Just as taking the Gospel of Thomas or some other "newly discovered text" into consideration would lead to different conclusions about the Gospels, Welch suggested, one might reasonably take the Book of Mormon into consideration when addressing critical questions about the Gospels (217). "Most scholars are willing to change or modify their opinions when new, credible evidence is discovered. My personal verdict is that the Sermon at the Temple constitutes such evidence" (218). Thus, whereas Huggins argued that Synoptic source criticism is evidence against the historical authenticity of the ST, Welch argued that the ST is evidence against Synoptic source criticism. "It would be circular, of course, to disallow the Sermon at the Temple as evidence against Matthean authorship by rejecting it simply on the ground that Matthew wrote the Sermon on the Mount, for that is the very question about which one seeks the further documentary evidence in the first place" (218-19).

Welch went on to offer some specific criticisms of conventional assumptions or claims in Synoptic criticism. The notion that Jesus' sayings were expanded over time is something that "many scholars assume" but that Welch did not find "compelling" (Welch 1999, 219). "It seems more likely to me, as a hypothesis, that the words and discourses of Jesus started out profound and already well developed, than that they began as disjointed sayings or fragmented maxims" (219-20). Welch suggested that while most scholars claim that Matthew drew on the shorter Sermon on the Plain (hereafter SP) as seen in Luke 6 for the SM, it is just as possible that "Luke 6 was dependent on the Sermon on the Mount" (220). For example, scholars disagree as to whether the Matthean or Lukan form of the Beatitudes was earlier.

"Much of this is sophisticated, technical, informed guesswork" (220), based on such questionable assumptions as that Jesus spoke beatitudes or taught his followers a form of the Lord's Prayer on only one occasion (221).

Welch suggested that Luke 6 reported a different speech of Jesus than the SM, and that in the SP Jesus was speaking to a larger audience and presenting "the more public elements of his message" while omitting those elements "reserved for the closer circle of disciples" (Welch 1999, 222). Some elements of the SM may indeed have post-dated Jesus' lifetime, such as "anti-Pharisaical, antigentile, or anti-Pauline sentiments," but "all of these elements, which may be strongly suspected of being late intrusions, are absent from the Sermon at the Temple" (223). Apparently Hellenistic elements in the SM (that are repeated in the ST) may have been known to Jesus from the surrounding culture and may not have been exclusively Hellenistic concepts (223-24).

Citing Betz, Welch suggested that the SM was a cultic text or a handbook of church rules for initiates that Matthew incorporated into his Gospel. He cites evidence of "tension" between the SM and the rest of the Gospel in support (Welch 1999, 224). He also argued that various "verbal and conceptual similarities" between the SM and the very early epistle of James show that "something like the Sermon on the Mount was already considered authoritative, whether oral or written" when James wrote (224, 225). "One must ask how a totally new sermon of Jesus, compiled and advanced by Matthew, would ever have been accepted" (225).

2.10 John Welch: The Sermons on the Mount and at the Temple as Temple Texts

John Welch's studies of the SM and the ST in relation to textual criticism (in direct response to Stan Larson) and Synoptic source criticism (in contrast to Ronald Huggins) have already been reviewed (see §2.6 and §2.9 above). Welch is without dispute the leading LDS scholar on the SM and the ST, and he has been at the forefront of LDS apologetics defending the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

Welch has written three books of relevance to the subject of the use of the SM in the Book of Mormon. *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (1990) was the first LDS book to address issues challenging the historical

authenticity of the ST as it appears in the Book of Mormon. Welch's thesis in the book is that the ST is not merely "a moral or ethical discourse" but a "temple text"—part of a "solemn, ceremony-like experience Jesus presented to those he met at the temple" of the Nephites (Welch 1990, 14, 34). In turn, the temple ritual context of the ST offers the "unifying and coherent understanding of the Sermon on the Mount" (10) that interpreters have struggled to find for nearly two millennia.

Welch examined the ST "textually, historically, analytically, comparatively, religiously, and ritually" and concluded that it is a rich scriptural text. In his view, many elements of the ST "are fundamentally comparable to the temple ceremony familiar to Latter-day Saints" (Welch 1990, 178, 179). "The Sermon on the Mount is a natural script for an initiation text, which means that it (like the parables of Jesus) may have had esoteric significance, as well as public levels of meaning, to early Christians" (179). Secondarily, Welch believed his study supports the historical authenticity of the ST and therefore of the Book of Mormon. The differences between the SM and the ST show that "the Sermon on the Mount was not crudely spliced into the text of 3 Nephi" from the KJV (180). "There are historical and philological reasons for believing that the Sermon at the Temple bears the hallmarks of an accurate and inspired translation of a contemporaneous record of the words that Jesus spoke in A.D. 34 at the temple in Bountiful" (180-81).

Nine years later, Welch issued a revised and somewhat expanded edition of his first book with the title *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple & Sermon on the Mount: An Approach to 3 Nephi 11-18 and Matthew 5-7* (1999). The plan and content of this edition is almost identical to that of the first book, though some of the material is updated (e.g., Welch's response to Larson, discussed above in §2.6). For that reason, what follows summarizes Welch's argument in both books at once.

Welch began by arguing that Christian scholarship on the SM is in disarray, lacking, even after nearly twenty centuries of intense reflection and debate, "a unifying interpretation" of the Sermon. He proposed to find the missing "key" to the SM in the ST, specifically in its overt temple setting (Welch 1990, 2-13; Welch 1999, 3-20). The ST was not only delivered at the temple in Bountiful, it was delivered in a covenant-making context on a holy day of ritual importance, which Welch proposed was Pentecost (Welch 1990, 14-33; Welch 1999, 24-46). Welch then proceeded, in what is the heart of both books, to catalogue numerous temple-related motifs or

concepts in the ST (he listed 48 in Welch 1990, 34-83, and subdivided one of these to yield 49 points in Welch 1999, 47-114). This catalogue of temple-related motifs will be reviewed a little further below.

After "some personal reflections" on the significance of this temple-focused interpretation of the ST for LDS faith (Welch 1990, 84-90; Welch 1999, 115-22), he turned his attention to the differences and similarities between the ST and the SM. The differences, Welch argued, have contextually reasonable explanations, such as the fact that the ST is delivered after Jesus' resurrection to a different group of people who were dependent on written rather than oral law. In some cases, the ST may omit material from the SM that did not originate with Jesus, such as statements that may have been anti-Pharisaical, anti-gentile, or anti-Pauline (Welch 1990, 91-112; Welch 1999, 125-50). "All this, in my opinion, speaks highly for the Sermon at the Temple as an appropriate, well-thought-out, and pertinent text, and it supplies considerable evidence that the Sermon at the Temple was not simply plagiarized superficially from the Sermon on the Mount" (Welch 1999, 146; cf. Welch 1990, 112).

As for the similarities between the ST and the SM, Welch acknowledged that "one may wonder if Jesus did *not* change some things from the Sermon on the Mount that he should have changed to make the text understandable to the Nephites" (Welch 1990, 113; Welch 1999, 151). For the most part, Welch responded, the content and wording of the Sermon would have been just as comprehensible and meaningful to Nephites as to Jews. The Sermon uses language universally understandable in almost any culture (*salt, light, sun, wind, treasure, bread, tree*, etc.) and draws words, phrases, and ideas extensively from the Old Testament scriptures that were basic to the common Israelite background of both Jews and Nephites (Welch 1990, 113-23; Welch 1999, 151-69). This common heritage in the Mosaic covenant and its scriptures is utilized in a new, transformative way in the ST appropriate to the new context of the gospel of Christ (Welch 1990, 123-25; Welch 1999, 169-72). Welch only found five problematic references in the ST that one might question—the uses of the Aramaic words *mammon* and *raca*, the clause "hate thine enemy," the references to figs and grapes, and the mention of the "council" or Sanhedrin (3 Ne. 12:22, 43; 13:24; 14:16; cf. Matt. 5:22, 43; 6:24; 7:16)—and in each case he argued that the Nephites would have been able to

understand Jesus' meaning (Welch 1990, 125-28; Welch 1999, 172-75). In a separate essay, Welch argued that the references to "synagogues" in the Book of Mormon, including in the ST (3 Ne. 13:5), were not anachronistic (Welch 1992c).

Having argued that "the Sermon at the Temple is appropriately nuanced and subtly different from the Sermon on the Mount," Welch proceeded to argue that the best explanation for this evidence is that the ST is an authentic translation and not plagiarized from the Bible. Because Joseph Smith dictated the text of the entire Book of Mormon in about two months, he would have had only about two days to produce the entire ST passage in 3 Nephi 11-18. This means he had no time to do research or to work out the details of the text with any care (Welch 1990, 130-31; Welch 1999, 179-80). Moreover, eyewitness accounts of Joseph's translation work deny that he used a Bible, other books, or any notes when dictating the Book of Mormon text (Welch 1990, 131-35; Welch 1999, 180-84).

Welch therefore rejected the theory of earlier LDS scholars that Joseph deliberately used the KJV when he came to passages in the Book of Mormon that were substantially the same. He suggested that God could have inspired Joseph to use the wording of the Bible or supernaturally aided Joseph to draw on his subconscious memory of the parallel passages. Just as Jesus and the apostles quoted the Hebrew Bible in the standard Greek translation available at the time (the Septuagint), it was appropriate for biblical quotations in the Book of Mormon to appear in the familiar style and idiom of the KJV (Welch 1990, 135-39; Welch 1999, 184-88). Welch characterized the English Book of Mormon as a "precise" translation, neither rigidly word for word nor loosely thought for thought (Welch 1990, 139-41; Welch 1999, 188-91).

Welch offered two examples from the larger passage of the ST in support of his view of the Book of Mormon as a precise translation. The first is the presence of an "elegant and coherent chiastic structure" in the Book of Mormon's account of Jesus healing the sick (3 Ne. 17:5-10). Welch has pioneered and developed a very sophisticated argument from the presence of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon as evidence of its antiquity (Welch 1969, 1991, 1995, 1997, 2003, 2007; see also Welch, ed., 1981; Welch and McKinlay, eds., 1999). The second evidence for precision in the Book of Mormon translation is its rendering "for my name's sake" at 3 Nephi 12:10, which Welch argued is closer in meaning to Jesus' likely Aramaic

wording than what one finds in the parallel in Matthew 5:10, "for righteousness' sake" (Welch 1990, 141-44; Welch 1999, 191-94).

The next two chapters in both books are the chapters on the issues stemming from textual criticism and Synoptic source criticism (Welch 1990, 145-77; Welch 1999, 199-237), previously discussed (see above, §2.6 and §2.9). The most significant addition in the second book came next: an entirely new chapter on "The Sermon in Light of Ritual Studies" (Welch 1999, 239-50), discussed later in this section. Welch then ended both books by concluding that the ST is both a powerful scripture and an authentic sermon of the historical Jesus (Welch 1990, 178-81; Welch 1999, 251-54).

The heart of both books, as mentioned earlier, is Welch's chapter-long catalogue of temple-related motifs in the ST. Welch substantially expanded and recast this catalogue in a third book, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* (2009). Unlike the previous two books, this one focuses exclusively on the SM, mentioning the Book of Mormon only in the second to last paragraph of the book (Welch 2009, 220-21).

Somewhat surprisingly, the book was published in the Society for Old Testament Study Series. The series is edited by Margaret Barker, an independent scholar whose works on the Bible have become highly regarded in LDS academic and apologetic circles (cf. Christensen 2001). According to Welch, Barker had actually suggested to him that he write a book for biblical scholars arguing for his interpretation using only the SM (Farnes and Welch 2009). Although Barker is never mentioned in the earlier two books on the ST, Welch cited her in this book on the SM more than any other modern author except for Hans Dieter Betz, the author of a lengthy and influential commentary on the SM (see Welch 2009, 37, 54, 58-60, 73, 75, 97, 120, 128, 132-33, 162-65, 182, 193). According to Barker's "temple theology," Christianity originated as a movement rooted in the polytheistic, pre-exilic Israelite religion that was suppressed and marginalized in the Josiah reform movement and almost entirely edited out of the Old Testament writings by the Deuteronomists (see especially Barker 1987, 1992, 2004a). Barker, a Methodist, has spoken at LDS academic conferences and published articles drawing applications of her temple theology for the study of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon (Barker 2004b, 2005, 2009). Welch drew heavily on Barker's writings to augment his case

for reading the SM as a temple text and indirectly for his view of the ST as an authentic, ancient text rooted in the same temple context (Welch 2009, 220-21).

Although his 2009 book presented a case for reading the SM in its own right as a temple text, in his two earlier books he argued that the temple theme of the SM is made clearer by the explicit temple and ritual context of the ST in the Book of Mormon. The first 15 of the 48 temple motifs Welch discerned in the Book of Mormon passage come from the narrative context preceding the ST (3 Ne. 11:1-12:2). In this context Welch found ritual themes, for example, in Jesus' descent in a white robe (which Welch suggests has ritual significance), the people's falling to the ground (prostration), the shout of Hosanna (a liturgical element), and the ordination of twelve Nephites with authority to baptize (Welch 1990, 35-42; Welch 1999, 48-56). The final eight temple motifs come from the narrative following Jesus' delivery of the ST (3 Ne. 15-18). The narrative climaxes with Jesus instituting the sacrament, conferring the power to bestow the Holy Ghost, and ascending back to heaven in a cloud recalling the manifestation of God's presence in the tabernacle (Welch 1990, 78-82; Welch 1999, 96-101).

Sandwiched in the midst of this narrative context is the ST, in which Welch found over two dozen temple or ritual thematic elements that are likewise present, for those who can see them, in the SM. In his 2009 book on the SM, Welch argued that the mountain location is functionally equivalent to that of a temple (Welch 2009, 15-39). He then presented the ritual elements of the Sermon as a series of 25 "stages" guiding new disciples progressively step by step in a three-phase path of spiritual "ascent." The first ten stages (Matt. 5:3-45; cf. 3 Ne. 12:3-45) introduce disciples to the blessings of "a new covenantal relationship" and instruct them in how to handle mundane matters and relationships faithfully (Welch 2009, 41-113; cf. Welch 1990, 42-57; Welch 1999, 56-74). The next six stages lead disciples into "a higher order of righteousness and consecration" in which divine perfection (Matt. 5:48; cf. 3 Ne. 12:48) is the goal, to be cultivated through giving, prayer, forgiving others, fasting, and complete consecration to God (Matt. 6:1-24, cf. 3 Ne. 13:1-24), all of which prepares the devotee to enter into God's presence (Welch 2009, 115-55; cf. Welch 1990, 57-68; Welch 1999, 74-84). "If Matthew 5 is about Moses, society, the Aaronic priesthood, and the law, then one may view Matthew 6 as pertaining to the domain of Melchizedek, the Lord, individual righteousness, and a distillation of

the prophets…" (Welch 2009, 115). In the remaining nine stages of the Sermon (Matt. 6:25-7:27; cf. 3 Ne. 13:25-14:23), "the inductees are now taken into the third chamber, as it were, of the structure of the Sermon on the Mount," akin to the Holy of Holies in the Temple, "the final step closer to entering into the innermost presence of God" (Welch 2009, 157). Devotees are promised supreme blessings if they continue progressing faithfully in their ascent to God, warned of the curse that will come on those who break their vow of confidentiality regarding their sacred rituals (as Mormons believe with regard to their own temple ceremonies), and prepare themselves to enter into the presence of the Lord (Welch 2009, 157-82; cf. Welch 1990, 68-78; Welch 1999, 84-96).

Welch drew together the threads of his argument in both his 1999 book on the ST and his 2009 book on the SM in a final chapter utilizing ritual studies to argue for the unity of the Sermon in the light of its temple themes (Welch 1999, 239-50; Welch 2009, 183-207). *Ritual studies* is a discipline associated especially with the social science of anthropology and that emerged as a significant approach in biblical studies in the 1990s (see especially Alexander 1994; Gorman 1994; and recently Klingbeil 2007; DeMaris 2008). According to Welch, the SM exhibits ten characteristics of ritually oriented texts such as religious conversion, imbuing daily life with sacred import, spiritual empowerment, and celebration (Welch 2009, 199-202). Welch suggested that various actions might have accompanied "ritual uses or ceremonial recitations of the Sermon on the Mount" such as "falling prostrate before God" or eating a sacral meal (203-204). "Just as ritual provides social order to one's way of life, ritual analysis can supply a deeply needed sense of underlying, unifying order in the Sermon itself" (Welch 1999, 248; cf. Welch 2009, 205).

Not all Mormons have agreed with Welch's approach to the ST. One reviewer of Welch's first book on the subject, while acknowledging that Welch's "pan-temple" interpretation yields some interesting insights, concluded that it requires some stretching and forcing of the text (Compton 1991). Robert Cloward, in an article discussed earlier, commented on Welch's temple-text interpretation that it "requires the reader to draw 'possible inferences' from background information, since proof of the theory is obscure or nonexistent in the scriptures." In his assessment, "portraying the sermon as a veiled synopsis of the temple endowment [ritual] seems to look beyond the mark" (Cloward 1993, 122). On the other hand, a reviewer of Welch's

most recent book found the sheer wealth of temple connections persuasive and concluded that Welch "has made his case that understanding the temple connections reinforces, rather than diminishes, the ethical aspects of the Sermon on the Mount" (Strathearn 2010, 15).

2.11 Brant Gardner: Commentary on the Book of Mormon

The first exegetically oriented commentary on the Book of Mormon is a massive six-volume series by Brant A. Gardner, a Mormon anthropologist, entitled *Second Witness*. The fifth volume includes 77 pages of commentary on the ST in 3 Nephi 12-14 (Gardner 2007, 5:396-472).

Noting that the wording of the additional "beatitudes" in the ST varies from that found in Matthew, Gardner suggested that Jesus had expressed the same ideas in a different form because the Jewish beatitude form "was not part of Nephite culture." The ST as it appears in the Book of Mormon is not a word-for-word transcript of Jesus' sermon because the author prepared the written account after the fact. "All sermons in ancient texts must contain an element of authorial construction simply because there were no recording tools that could accurately reproduce continuous speech" (5:398). Gardner also attributed such "authorial construction" to Joseph Smith in his role as inspired translator of the Book of Mormon. For example, in Gardner's view the first line of the beatitude in Matthew 5:6 most likely includes a Matthean gloss, "hunger and thirst *after righteousness*," and the Book of Mormon adds an interpretive gloss to the second line, "filled *with the Holy Ghost*" (3 Ne. 12:6). Although Mormons commonly and even fervently maintain that 3 Nephi simply records what Jesus said to the Nephites, Jesus could hardly have worded his sayings to include a later gloss by Matthew (Gardner 2007, 5:403). Gardner therefore concluded "that Joseph Smith was interacting with the Matthean text" in his production of the Book of Mormon and not simply translating what was on the plates (5:404). He admitted that in some cases Joseph's changes to the Matthean text reflect misunderstandings or introduces imperfections but saw no reason why such mistakes should call the inspiration of the Book of Mormon into question (5:414).

With regard to the omission of "without a cause" in 3 Nephi 12:22, Gardner agreed with Welch that the omission more closely conforms to Jesus' original

meaning in the SM but, he cautioned, "While it is tempting to see the removal of the phrase in the Book of Mormon as a return to the original manuscripts, there are other examples in the text where this is not done" (Gardner 2007, 5:422 n. 39). For example, later Gardner observed that Joseph Smith followed the KJV in its inclusion of the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer, which Gardner agreed was not in the prayer as Jesus taught it. "Joseph's translation method did not always require him to translate known texts anew from the plates. He obviously took the position that it was preferable for his audience that texts resembling the King James Version also replicate its language" (5:451).

Whereas Welch viewed the use of the term *senine* instead of *farthing* in 3 Nephi 12:26 as evidence of an appropriate difference between the Book of Mormon and the KJV sermons (Welch 1999, 129-30), Gardner pointed out that more often the Book of Mormon does not exhibit such linguistic differences. "It is not clear that the New World would have understood (or at least in the same way) such terms as 'poor,' 'bread,' 'pigs,' 'barns,' 'knock,' 'lamp,' 'pearls,' or 'debts'" (Gardner 2007, 5:424-25).

At various points, Gardner acknowledged that the cultural or social context of Jesus' sayings in the SM does not fit the Book of Mormon context of the ST. For example, Jesus' instruction to his Jewish disciples to go a second mile when conscripted into service for a mile (Matt. 5:41) presupposed the Roman occupation as well as "the honor culture of the Mediterranean." Yet in the Book of Mormon the Nephites "were not a conquered people" and "the Nephites probably had no experience" with the conscription practice since it originated after the time Lehi would have left Jerusalem. He explained the presence of this verse in the Book of Mormon by saying, "Even though this particular example would have had no cultural referent in the New World, the principle of foregoing retaliation was still important" (Gardner 2007, 5:431-32). In some instances, Gardner concluded that Joseph's translation follows the KJV even where Jesus used different illustrations for his Nephite audience: "Jesus must have given examples that would have communicated the same meaning to the Nephites, while Joseph retained Matthew's examples for their familiarity to his audience" (5:466).

Gardner even acknowledged that the ST alludes to New Testament passages written after the time Jesus appeared to the Nephites. For example, he stated

without explanation or apology that the statement in the ST, "Old things are done away, and all things have become new" (3 Ne. 12:47) "alludes to 2 Corinthians 5:17" (Gardner 2007, 5:435).

According to Gardner, "Even though the King James Version is the base model for the 3 Nephi redaction, Joseph Smith did not copy it blindly" (Gardner 2007, 5:439). In some places Joseph made changes deliberately, while in other places the changes may have been accidental and erroneous. For instance, whereas some LDS interpreters have explained the omission of "Thy kingdom come" from the Lord's Prayer in 3 Nephi 12:10 as reflecting a different eschatological situation for the Nephites, Gardner suggested "that the absence is most likely explained as an error" (5:447). Elsewhere Gardner agreed that Joseph's changes were deliberate but questions the explanations offered by Welch and others. For example, some LDS teachers explain the omission of "Give us this day our daily bread" from the Lord's Prayer (3 Ne. 13:11) by reasoning that Jesus included these words only when speaking to the apostles who were to pursue their missionary efforts without carrying any money. Gardner objected to this view, which assumes that the SM was directed only to the Twelve: "Both the Old World and the New World sermons are given to a multitude of believers." Welch had offered no less than three possible explanations, including that Jesus intended "to supply a unique sacramental meal at the end of the day" (Welch 1999, 145). As Gardner put it, "All of these reasons begin with the assumption that the text is a verbatim report of Jesus' words that have not undergone any interactive alteration in Joseph's translation." Such an assumption is belied by the fact that the ST often does not reflect New World culture (Gardner 2007, 5:449). Gardner proposed that Joseph omitted the "daily bread" petition because he understood such texts as Genesis 3:19 to teach that people needed to produce their own food rather than ask God to give it to them (Gardner 2007, 5:450).

Although Gardner rarely cited Blake Ostler's article on the Book of Mormon (Ostler 1987; see above, §2.7) and nowhere in the commentary specifically compared his view to Ostler's, these two LDS scholars set forth a similar view of the Book of Mormon and of the ST in particular. Both of them argued that the Book of Mormon was based on an authentic ancient book that was written on the gold plates that Joseph translated by divine inspiration. Both of them also argued that Joseph

Smith freely drew on the KJV for his wording of the ST (and other parts of the Book of Mormon). Both Ostler and Gardner also concluded that Joseph Smith played an active, interpretive role in the production of the English version of the Book of Mormon. In an email to LDS blogger Blair Hodges, Gardner acknowledged the similarities (Hodges 2008).

2.12 The 2010 Sperry Symposium: *The Sermon on the Mount in Latter-day Scripture*

In the year following Welch's book on *The Sermon on the Mount in Light of the Temple* (discussed above, §2.10), BYU devoted its 39th annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium to the subject of *The Sermon on the Mount in Latter-day Scripture* (Strathearn, Wayment, and Belnap 2010). The published volume for the symposium included papers from Welch and eleven other professors at BYU, as well as a few other LDS scholars. Several of the essayists took approaches to the SM that were largely or even completely independent of Welch's work. Welch's essay (Welch 2010a) reviewed aspects of his earlier work and extended it by arguing that the material in the ST (3 Ne. 12-14) is repeatedly cited or used in subsequent chapters of the Book of Mormon (3 Ne. 15-28). Although every essay has some potential significance for the present study, the focus here will be on some of the more directly relevant essays, especially those raising important methodological issues.

Amy Hardison's essay focused on the "sociocultural context" of the SM (Hardison 2010). Drawing especially on the work of New Testament scholar Bruce Malina, Hardison argued that the SM should be understood in relation to the social value system of honour and shame that dominated the ancient Mediterranean world (Hardison 2010, 25-27). She pointed out that when Jesus taught his disciples not to do their almsgiving so as to be seen by other people (Matt. 6:1-4) he "negated the very reason for giving alms and challenged the conventional expression of a core value" (27). The terms "*raca*" and "fool" (Matt. 5:22) "were insulting and thus challenges to honor" (28). Christ's famous injunction to turn the other cheek (Matt. 5:39) was especially shocking because it meant that the disciple was "to forfeit his honor, his most important asset, for the sake of peace" (29). The Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-22) are pronouncements that God honours those are currently dishonoured because of their association with Christ (30-32). Hardison also argued

that the patron-client system of patronage, which also played a large role in society, figured significantly in the SM. Jesus' statement that one cannot serve both God and Mammon (Matt. 6:24) presupposed the cultural assumption that a client cannot have two patrons (33). The disciples, for whom God was their Patron, were to honour him publicly and to trust him for their needs (34). Jesus' warning that in the judgment he will say to those who falsely claim to be his disciples, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23), is denying that he is their patron and therefore denying any responsibility for them (35). After examining other contextual aspects of the SM, Hardison concluded that to understand the sermon fully one must overcome the "chasm of culture and values" between the ancient Mediterranean world and one's own (39).

Valérie Triplet-Hitoto discussed the contrasting reasons why the hearers of the SM "were astonished" (Matt. 7:28) and the hearers of the ST "marvelled, and wondered" (3 Ne. 15:2). She cited the Dead Sea Scrolls and other literature from Second Temple Judaism, as well as the Talmud, to show that Jesus' teaching style and forms of speech in the SM (specifically the use of beatitudes and the thesis-antithesis form of argumentation) were common to his first-century Jewish culture, though adapted to express his teaching authoritatively (Triplet-Hitoto 2010, 43-46). She argued that what really astonished the Jews was Jesus' claim to speak with divine authority because they had lost the understanding of continuing revelation. The Pharisees' belief "that prophetic revelation such as found in the Bible had come to an end" lay behind the people's reaction to Jesus, who claimed that his authority rested not on the interpretation of the Law but on new revelation (47-48). "It is this appeal to direct divine authority that ultimately is the cause for the audience's astonishment recorded by Matthew" (49). The Nephites, on the other hand, believed in continuing revelation (51-52). They were simply temporarily confused as to how the law was fulfilled, something Jesus revealed to them in the ST that he had not revealed in the SM because it had been delivered before Christ's death and resurrection (53). Once Christ had explained to them how the law had been fulfilled, they quickly understood "because they understood the principles of personal revelation, having received a personal witness of Christ's authority" (56).

In his essay, Andrew C. Skinner argued that the Psalms had great influence on the Beatitudes in the SM. He followed Welch (2009) in seeing Jesus' use of psalm material in the setting of a mountain-top sermon as associating the SM with

the temple (Skinner 2010, 62). Skinner found that the very form of the Beatitudes derived from the Psalms (65-66) and that the content of the Beatitudes also was rooted in the Psalms (66-73).

According to Matthew O. Richardson, "the Sermon on the Mount seems to be a disciple's manual to be in the world but not worldly" (M. Richardson 2010, 77). In his view, the mountain setting symbolizes the necessity of disciples choosing "to leave the world behind and come unto Christ" (79). The Beatitudes reveal a higher kind of happiness that disciples can have while they are in the world yet that is beyond anything the world can offer (79-80). The metaphors of salt and light mean that disciples are in the world to provide the positive other-worldly influence of Christ (80-87).

David A. LaFevre's essay focused on "The Sermon on the Mount in the Joseph Smith Translation" (LaFevre 2010). LaFevre noted various differences in the wording of the SM in the JST and the KJV, including substantial material that the JST adds to the SM. In some places he also compared these two versions of the SM to the ST in the Book of Mormon. For example, in Matthew the six "antitheses" of Jesus in Matthew 5:21-48 each contrast what Jesus says with what others "said." In the JST, three of these six are changed to say "written," whereas in the ST five of the six have "written" in place of "said." LaFevre suggested that the wording in the ST reflected a greater dependence in Nephite society on written records while the wording in the JST reflected a greater dependence of the Jews on oral tradition (288-89). With regard to the JST version of the Lord's Prayer, LaFevre commented, "Joseph Smith's corrections were made by the Spirit of God, not by deciphering a collection of early and often contradictory manuscripts" (292). Where Joseph's revisions happen to match some ancient Greek manuscripts or other early versions, LaFevre cited these in support, but where the manuscript evidence does not support the JST he did not find this problematic (292-93).

Thomas A. Wayment considered "How New Testament variants contribute to the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount" (Wayment 2010). He focused on the variants in the SM in Matthew, the SP in Luke, and the ST in the Book of Mormon, along with the JST variants which he said are usually the same as in the ST (299). Wayment suggested that in some cases the JST variants may restore the wording of the original text while in other cases it may restore the correct meaning or translation

of the known Greek wording (300). An example of the former is the omission of "without a cause" in Matthew 5:22 (300-301). Wayment also discussed the inclusion of "openly" in Matthew 6:4, 6, 18, which he agreed was probably a later scribal addition that changed the meaning (304-306), but he did not mention that this later variant is retained in both the Book of Mormon and the JST. As mentioned earlier (§2.6), Wayment also agreed that the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer in the KJV was appended by later scribes (206-207). This is another textual issue where the Book of Mormon and the JST follow a textually inferior reading.

2.13 The *Status Quaestionis* and Unresolved Issues

Chapter 1 set forth nine research questions of relevance to the research problem. In this section the *status quaestionis* of that research problem—the historicity of the ST in the Book of Mormon—is analysed by summarizing the different answers to those questions from various Mormon and non-Mormon scholars as seen in the preceding review of academic literature on the ST. With each question, some comment is given about what issues remain unresolved or need to be addressed in new ways. These questions fall into three groups: questions about the nature of the ST, about the similarities between the ST and the SM, and about the differences between the ST and the SM.

Questions about the Nature of the Sermon at the Temple

1. **Current state of scholarship on the ST**. At present, non-Mormon scholars have written very little on the question of the historicity of the ST. Four significant articles on the subject have been written by three non-Mormon New Testament scholars: Krister Stendahl (1978), Vernon Robbins (1995), and Ron Huggins (1997; 2003). These three scholars all argued for the view that the ST is a nineteenth-century creation by Joseph Smith and not a historically authentic sermon preached by Jesus in the Americas. At least two Mormon scholars have argued for the same conclusion: the RLDS author William Russell (1982) and the LDS author Stan Larson (1986, 1993), although Larson is no longer LDS because of his research. This assessment of the ST is here called the *modern apocrypha view*.

The traditional and still dominant believing LDS view is that the ST is a literal translation from the gold plates of an authentic sermon preached by Jesus to the

Nephites. This view is assumed or defended by many LDS scholars (e.g., Cloward 1985; 1993; D. Sorenson 2004; Skinner 2010; LaFevre 2010) but has been defended most notably and in depth by John Welch (1990; 1999). This understanding of the ST is here called the *literal translation view*.

A view mediating between the modern apocrypha and literal translation views is that Jesus did preach a sermon like the SM to the Nephites, but that much of the specific wording of the ST derives from Joseph Smith's knowledge of and reflection on the SM in the KJV. LDS anthropologist Brant Gardner has developed this view—which is very similar to the view more briefly proposed by Blake Ostler (1987)—in his commentary on the Book of Mormon (Gardner 2007, 5:396-472). This approach to the ST is here called the *non-literal historical view*.

With the exception of Stan Larson's revised article on textual criticism and the ST (Larson 1993), there has been no academic or scholarly defence of the modern apocrypha view that even acknowledges any of the works discussed here that defend the literal translation and non-literal historical view. The most notable criticisms of Welch's literal translation view have come from Gardner, who defended the non-literal historical view as a critical LDS alternative to the literal translation view. There is, then, a significant need for an evangelical Christian defence of the modern apocrypha view that engages the scholarly arguments presented over the past two decades by advocates of the other two views.

2. **The nature of the Book of Mormon translation**. The two LDS views of the ST that affirm its historicity differ on what sort of translation it is. The traditional view, defended by Welch, is that Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon was a literal translation of text engraved on the gold plates. Welch represented the ST as a "precise" translation from the gold plates that exhibits ancient literary structures and even corrects textual or translation errors in the KJV (Welch 1999, 188-94, 200-201). The more critical, non-literal view, defended by Gardner, is that the Book of Mormon is a translation of the gold plates, but that in the case of passages of the Book of Mormon that are substantially the same as passages in the Bible, Joseph Smith used the KJV as his "base model." In particular, Gardner described the ST as a "redaction" of the SM (Gardner 2007, 5:403-404, 414, 439). Those who view the ST as non-historical, of course, do not view the Book of Mormon as a "translation" at all.

Two sub-questions will need to be addressed in this regard. The first is whether there is any substantive difference between Gardner's non-literal historical view and the modern apocrypha view as far as the relationship between the ST and the SM. That is, would the ST read any different depending on which of these two non-literal views one accepted? The second sub-question is what the evidence independent of the ST shows as far as whether the Book of Mormon is in any meaningful sense a translation from ancient writings. That is, it will be necessary to address Welch's argument (Welch 1999, 179-84) that the evidence shows that Joseph Smith was genuinely dictating a translation and that the results were beyond his natural abilities.

Questions about the Similarities of the Two Sermons

3. **The shared content of the ST and the SM in principle accessible to both audiences**. Welch, defending the literal translation view, maintained that all of the content of the ST is based in knowledge that would have been accessible to both Jews and Nephites. He argued that most of the vocabulary of the ST uses language practically universal in accessibility and that most of the ST uses language and motifs recognizable in the Old Testament writings to which the Nephites had access (Welch 1999, 151-69). Skinner (2010) supported this position by arguing that both the form and the content of the Beatitudes are rooted in the Psalms. Everyone, of course, agrees that the SM (and therefore the ST) reflects some universal concepts and is rooted in Old Testament teachings and motifs. The issue, however, is just how far these sources go toward explaining the commonalities of the SM and the ST. To make a determination on that issue, one must answer the next three questions pertaining to the similarities between the two sermons.

4. **The context of the SM in Second Temple Judaism**. Everyone must acknowledge that Jesus delivered the SM in the geographical, historical, religious, political, economic, and cultural context of Second Temple Judaism. However, what needs to be determined is the extent to which the SM is *contextualized* in specific ways relative to that context. Here it is important to distinguish three kinds of material in the SM that is also found in the ST: (a) material just as relevant and understandable outside that context as inside it; (b) material especially or pointedly relevant and fully understandable only inside that context, but adequately accessible

outside that context; and (c) material that would be anachronistic, irrelevant, or not understandable to those outside that context, specifically to those in the putative context of the Nephites. Examples of elements of the SM that scholars debate with regard to this issue are the occurrences of the Aramaic terms *raca* and *mammon*, references to figs and grapes, and the gloss "and hate thine enemy."

Welch's position is that the ST contains material from the SM that falls mostly into the first category, a very small amount of material that may fall into the second category, but no material that belongs to the third category (see especially Welch 1999, 172-75). Gardner argued that the ST includes material in all three categories; the material that would not have been meaningful to the Nephites constitutes Joseph Smith's redaction of the sermon for modern readers who are familiar with the New Testament (Gardner 2007, 5:403-404, 424-25, 431-32, 466). Also to be taken into consideration is the evidence cited by such LDS scholars as Hardison (2010), who showed that the SM reflected ancient Mediterranean cultural values, and Triplet-Hitoto (2010, 43-46), who documented that Jesus' teaching style and speech forms in the SM were common among Jewish teachers of his culture.

While advocates of the modern apocrypha view will see such material as evidence for their view, Gardner's position is that such material is consistent with his more critically viable, non-literal historical view. Thus, it is necessary to consider not only what evidence there is of the contextualization of the SM but which hypothesis *best* accounts for this evidence.

5. **Matthew's role in the SM**. The issue here is the extent to which shared features of the ST and the SM likely originated from the author of the Gospel of Matthew as distinct from those elements that more likely originated from Jesus. The reasonable assumption is that Jesus would not be likely to incorporate into the ST he preached to the Nephites elements from the Gospel of Matthew that Jesus had not himself used in his delivery of the SM. Thus, advocates of the literal translation view argue that there are no such elements in the ST (D. Sorenson 2004, 121-27; Welch 1999, 214-25), in contrast to the arguments of advocates of the modern apocrypha view that there are such elements (Russell 1982, 24-25; Huggins 1997). Gardner's non-literal historical position allows for the possibility of some Matthean elements in the ST (see Gardner 2007, 5:403), but to what extent and of what types is not clear from his treatment of the sermon.

Several factors, each of them raised by one or more of the authors just cited, must be considered in relation to this question. There is the matter of the relationship between the SM in Matthew and the SP in Luke. The traditional LDS view seems to have been that these are two different accounts of the same sermon (McConkie 1965, 214-15; Cloward 1993, 123), but this view seems difficult to square with the literal translation view, as Welch recognized (Welch 1999, 222).

A related and major controversy is the matter of the source or sources of the SM, which is an issue imbedded in the Synoptic problem. If Matthew and Luke both drew their non-Markan parallel material from an earlier common source ("Q"), it seems almost inevitable that both authors exercised some editorial or redactional role in the presentation of that material in their Gospels (although D. Sorenson 2004, 121-22, disputes this inference). Yet where Luke's SP diverges in wording or order from Matthew's SM, the ST in the Book of Mormon always agrees with Matthew. Matthean editorial activity is necessarily implied also by Huggins's suggestion that Matthew may have drawn his SM material from Luke (Huggins 1992). Another related issue is whether Matthew's SM material originated as smaller units of oral tradition that circulated independently and that he, or his source, arranged in the sermonic form found in Matthew 5-7. These interrelated controversies are the focus of biblical critical methods classically known as form criticism, source criticism, and redaction criticism. It will be necessary to consider what can be known, or at least viewed as probable, in these matters and how they pertain to the material that the ST has in common with the SM.

6. **The influence of the KJV on the ST**. The concern here is with elements of the ST in the Book of Mormon that are not traceable to Jesus, Matthew, or any other ancient source, but most likely originated in some way from the KJV. Virtually all of the authors surveyed here acknowledged some influence of the KJV on the wording of the ST. The issue here is the extent of that influence and how best to account for it. Welch allowed that God may have inspired Joseph to use the language and style of the KJV or to draw on his subconscious knowledge of some parts of the KJV, but he denied that Joseph actually copied from the KJV or knowingly used its wording (Welch 1999, 184-88). Advocates of both the modern apocrypha and non-literal historical views, on the other hand, have acknowledged

that Joseph Smith consciously used the text of the SM as it appears in the KJV as the basis for the ST.

A much-debated issue of relevance here is the evidence from textual criticism of the SM in Matthew. Larson argued that the KJV in several places clearly followed an inferior textual reading or variant and that the ST follows these inferior readings and adopts the precise wording of the KJV in translating those secondary variants (Larson 1986; 1993). Welch's response to Larson's argument was somewhat ambivalent; he argued both that in every instance it is possible that the ST exhibits the correct reading and that in most instances, at least, it does not matter which reading is original. Welch also emphasized that in one instance, the omission of "without a cause" (Matt. 5:22; 3 Ne. 12:22), the ST text is superior to that of the KJV and therefore clearly independent of it (Welch 1994a; Welch 1999, 199-208). While some Mormon scholars agree with Welch about this example (e.g., Judd and Stoddard 2006; Wayment 2010, 300-301), Gardner cautioned that the example is an isolated one and must be compared with the several other places where the ST follows the KJV's inferior reading (Gardner 2007, 5:422).

Once again, the question is which of the three explanations *best* accounts for the apparent influence of the KJV on the ST. Slight or intermittent influence might be amenable to Welch's literal translation view, but pervasive or systemic influence likely would not. Pervasive influence that leads to errors in the ST would seem to be good evidence for the modern apocrypha view, though up to a point Gardner's non-literal historical view may be able to accommodate such evidence. It will thus be necessary to determine just what the influence of the KJV on the ST is and to find some rational method for concluding which explanation best explains the data.

Questions about the Differences between the Two Sermons

7. **Defective changes of the SM in the ST**. The issue here is whether there are places where the ST changes the SM in some defective or erroneous way that would undermine its claim to be an inspired translation (literal or not) of an ancient sermon similar to the SM. The present review of the literature on the ST has made note of several alleged examples of such changes.

One category of defective change is that of literary or stylistic changes. These may be instances where the SM exhibits some literary, artistic, or rhetorical feature

that is corrupted or weakened or accidentally eliminated in the ST. Stendahl, for example, cited the omission of the second line of a two-line parallelism in Matthew 5:45 as an instance of a stylistic disruption in the ST (cf. 3 Ne. 12:45; Stendahl 1978, 146). Another type of stylistic change is the use of language characteristic of a different biblical author that deviates from the style of the Matthean SM, such as the heavy use of "verily" and "verily, verily" in the ST, which Stendahl characterized as a Johannine stylistic feature (143, 145).

Another type of defective change is that of glosses or additions to the text that alter its meaning in dubious or questionable ways. A disputed example comes from Stendahl, who argued that the gloss "filled *with the Holy Ghost*" (3 Ne. 12:6) seems plausible in English but not in Greek, where the word for "filled" is *chortazō* rather than *pleroō* (Stendahl 1978, 142). Welch, however, argued that the Book of Mormon usage has precedent in the use of *chortazō* in the Greek translation of Psalm 17:15 (16:15 LXX; Welch 1990, 114-15). On the other hand, Gardner did not comment on the Greek word but instead argued that "for righteousness" was itself a Matthean gloss and that "with the Holy Ghost," which presupposes the Matthean gloss, was Joseph's additional gloss (Gardner 2007, 5:402-404).

A third type of dubious change identified by Stendahl is the introduction of what he called a "Johannine" theological outlook. Stendahl argued that whereas the SM in Matthew presented Jesus as "a teacher of righteousness," in the ST the sermon is "Christianized" and Jesus is presented as the object of faith (Stendahl 1978, 143, 145, 150). What Stendahl saw as evidence of later reworking of a more primitive tradition, however, Mormons see as evidence of the restoration of lost elements of the original revelation. Indeed, the Book of Mormon not only presents a more "Christianized" version of the Sermon on the Mount, but gives an explicitly Christianized narrative of the supposed history of the Nephites in the six centuries *prior to the coming of Christ*—a narrative in which the future Messiah is explicitly called "Jesus Christ" and people are summoned to put their faith in him for salvation (e.g., 2 Ne. 25:16-29; Jacob 1:4-8; Mos. 3:8-19; Alma 5:48; Hel. 5:9). If such changes to the SM in the ST are to be shown to be out of place, the argument will have to address the LDS views of revelation and restoration. In addition, Welch argued that some of these more explicitly Christian elements of the ST are appropriate because the ST, unlike the SM, was a post-resurrection sermon (Welch

1999, 128-29). This study of the ST, then, will need to assess allegedly dubious changes to the SM in order to determine whether they are indeed evidence against the historical authenticity of the ST.

8. **Creditable changes of the SM in the ST**. The best category of potential evidence for the historical authenticity of the ST is that of changes to the SM that make the ST more suitable or appropriate to its supposed New World, post-resurrection context.

Negatively, LDS scholars such as Welch argue that omission of elements from the SM that would be inappropriate or awkward in its Book of Mormon context demonstrate at a minimum that Joseph Smith did not simply copy the SM into the Book of Mormon. The more such creditable omissions can be specified, and the more subtle they are, the more plausible the ST appears. An obvious example would be the omission of references to the scribes and Pharisees (e.g., Cloward 1985, 177; cf. Huggins 1997, 146-47). More subtly, Welch suggested that the omission of some elements of the SM from the ST can be explained as omitting statements that were not part of Jesus' sermon but were Matthean additions reflecting "anti-Pharisaical, antigentile, or anti-Pauline" concerns (Welch 1999, 223).

Positively, the inclusion of new material in the ST *not* found in the SM can count as evidence in favour of its historical authenticity if the new material reflects knowledge of ancient texts, places, events, or cultures unavailable to Joseph Smith or any other plausible early nineteenth-century author. Welch has argued that the presence of the ancient literary device of chiasmus in a nearby passage (3 Ne. 17:5-10) is such a piece of evidence (Welch 1999, 141-42). He has also argued, more broadly and subtly, that the narrative framing of the ST and various aspects of the sermon itself reveal that the SM was an ancient temple text suitable for a covenant initiation ritual, based on recent advances in ritual studies that were unavailable to Joseph Smith or anyone else in the nineteenth century (Welch 1999, 24-114, 239-50). Yet not all LDS interpreters of the ST or the SM agree with Welch's view (e.g., Cloward 1993, 122). It will therefore be necessary to examine the SM in its Matthean context, as well as the ST in its Book of Mormon context, to determine whether this or another interpretation of its genre and purpose is correct.

9. **Changes explicable in terms of Joseph Smith's knowledge base**. Some explanation for the differences between the ST and the SM must be given in

any theory of the origins of the ST. One may attribute such differences to Jesus in his act of preaching, to Mormon (the principal ancient author of the original Book of Mormon), or to Joseph Smith. The literal translation view entails that all or nearly all of the differences originate from Jesus or Mormon (and usually it is assumed they originate from Jesus); the modern apocrypha view holds that all of the differences originate from Joseph Smith; and the non-literal historical view maintains that the differences derive in some cases from Jesus (or Mormon) and in other cases from Joseph Smith. The question must be asked, then, to what extent the differences between the ST and the SM can or should be attributed to Joseph Smith.

In order for the modern apocrypha view to be correct, all of the differences must in principle be explicable in terms of Joseph Smith's knowledge base. For example, some of the scholars surveyed in this chapter have argued that Joseph Smith could have known or surmised that the words "without a cause" did not belong in Matthew 5:22 (Larson 1993, 127-29; Huggins 2003, 168-78; Gardner 2007, 5:422). Such an argument seeks only to show that such differences are consistent with the modern apocrypha theory. Arguments showing that certain differences are *best* explained in terms of knowledge or beliefs that were part of Joseph Smith's cultural setting would offer positive support for the modern apocrypha view. A possible example would be the allusion to 2 Corinthians 5:17 in the ST (3 Ne. 12:47). Since Gardner, who advocates the non-literal historical view, has acknowledged this allusion (Gardner 2007, 5:435), some attention will need to be given to assessing which explanation best accounts for such phenomena in the ST.

This chapter's review of the academic literature on the ST has provided an answer to the first of the nine questions. The remaining eight questions will all need to be answered in this study in order to address the research problem fully. The goal will be to determine which of the three hypotheses concerning the ST—the literal translation, non-literal historical, and modern apocrypha views—best accounts for all of the evidence relevant to those eight questions. Before examining that evidence, however, it will be important to give some consideration to what presuppositions or assumptions should guide the research, what research methods should be employed, and how those methods should be applied to the evidence. These methodological issues will be addressed in the next chapter.

3 TOWARD AN EVANGELICAL CRITICAL METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

3.1 The Possibility of an Evangelical Critical Methodology for the Study of the Book of Mormon

3.1.1 The Need for an Evangelical Critical Methodology

The purpose of this study is to assess the historical authenticity of a speech attributed to Jesus Christ in a key passage in the Book of Mormon (3 Ne. 12-14) that closely parallels the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). The assessment is performed from an evangelical Christian perspective and seeks to give due consideration to arguments marshalled by LDS scholars in defence of the speech's authenticity. The study takes a particular approach to this issue that is here called an *evangelical critical methodology* to the study of the Book of Mormon. This chapter defines, explains, and defends this methodology. After defining what is meant by such a methodology, the chapter explains in some detail what is meant by an evangelical perspective and the significance of such a perspective in a critical study of the Book of Mormon. The rest of the chapter explains the study's methodology with regard to the nature of the knowledge sought and the type of reasoning used and defends the application of historical criticism to the study of religious texts such as the Book of Mormon.

Although the Book of Mormon was published over 180 years ago and is a key element in Mormonism's challenge to evangelical Christianity, to date evangelical scholars have published very few academic studies critically engaging any of the issues pertaining to the Book of Mormon. In addition to the two articles by Ronald Huggins discussed earlier (see above, §2.6 and §2.9), one may mention a master's thesis by Wesley Walters (1981) and the concluding two essays in the book *The*

New Mormon Challenge (Beckwith, Mosser, and Owen 2002), in which two evangelical Old Testament scholars (Thomas J. Finley and David J. Shepherd) offer some critique of the Book of Mormon.

In addition to the works just mentioned, a number of evangelicals who are not professional academic scholars have produced a variety of resources critical of the Book of Mormon, some of which are heavily researched and insightful (notably Abanes 2002, 46-80; Abanes 2004, 51-79, 353-69; Ross Anderson 2008; Cowdrey, Davis, and Vanick 2005; Hullinger 1992; Marquardt 2005, 77-210; Paulson 2006, 205-68; Persuitte 2000; Tanner and Tanner 2010). As helpful and informative as such works can be, there remains a serious dearth of academically rigorous scholarship on the Book of Mormon. In particular, there is a need for evangelical scholarship that engages the sophisticated Book of Mormon apologetic literature flowing from BYU, the Maxwell Institute (formerly FARMS), and FAIRMormon (a lay-run LDS apologetics organization).

Academic and semi-academic studies critical of the Book of Mormon, or at least of the traditional LDS view of the Book of Mormon, have been produced by liberal or "dissident" Mormons or by former Mormons who appear now to be sceptics. The ground-breaking collection of essays in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Metcalfe ed. 1993) is the most influential of these works and includes an essay on the SM in the Book of Mormon discussed earlier (Larson 1993; see above, §2.6). Other revisionist or critical studies reaching similar conclusions about the Book of Mormon followed (notably R. D. Anderson 1999; L. Petersen 2000; Vogel and Metcalfe eds. 2001; Palmer 2002).

Although these LDS-oriented works do not all share exactly the same philosophical and theological perspectives, conservative Mormon scholars contend that the methodology or approach that dominates this body of literature is anti-supernatural and sceptical. William Hamblin, for example, complained that "Metcalfe's approach is typical of a new and virulent strain of anti-Mormons who are secular in their presuppositions, scholarly in their pretensions, and deceptive in their presentations" (Hamblin 1994, 434 n. 2). Conservative Mormons have also argued that evangelical critics of the Book of Mormon sometimes make common cause with such secularist critics "without appearing to realize (or with wanton disregard to the fact) that such attacks are inimical to their own stance" (Midgley 1995, 236 n. 28). It

falls outside the purview of this study to assess the validity of these criticisms, which conservative LDS scholars apply to most if not all of the literature critical of the historical and theological claims of the Book of Mormon. The complaints, though, are relevant here as warnings of the necessity of giving careful attention to the methodology to be employed in approaching and assessing the Book of Mormon. Furthermore, such LDS scholars have made some significant comments on the issue of methodology that are noted at various places in this chapter.

Although LDS scholars acknowledge that the Book of Mormon is the legitimate object of critical study, they question whether such study can adjudicate the question of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. According to Hugh Nibley, "The Book of Mormon can and should be tested" (Nibley 1988a, 16). The difficulty lies in determining the method by which such tests should be conducted. John Welch noted that even among Mormon scholars "little has been written in this field of study about methodology itself," and he pled for a more rigorous approach to Book of Mormon studies in which scholars make their method and assumptions explicit (Welch 1994a, 146). He expressed doubts, however, about the possibility of academic investigation proving or disproving the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon, "for the methodological engine to drive a conclusion on this issue cannot be agreed upon" (150).

It may in fact be too much to ask for a methodology for examining the authenticity of the Book of Mormon to be fully agreeable to both Mormons and non-Mormons. This does not mean that non-LDS scholars should ignore Mormon concerns about methodology, since it may be that in some instances a non-Mormon approach makes gratuitous or question-begging assumptions that needlessly weaken the cogency of the resulting conclusions. A non-Mormon's methodology need not be completely acceptable to Mormons but neither should it simply assume the inauthenticity of the Book of Mormon such that no amount or kind of evidence would matter.

3.1.2 Defining an Evangelical Critical Methodology

What is proposed here is the development of an *evangelical critical methodology* for assessing the claims of the Book of Mormon. It will be helpful at this point to define each of these terms. First, by *methodology* is meant here a

systematic understanding of the presuppositions, assumptions, theoretical foundations, worldview elements, or heuristic principles pertaining to the study or investigation at hand. In this sense methodology is distinguished from *method*, a specific type of investigation or study focused on a specific category of evidence, such as textual criticism or archaeology (*contra* Metcalfe ed. 1993, ix, where "critical methodology" simply encompasses numerous such methods). Whereas a method is "the procedures and techniques characteristic of a particular discipline or field of knowledge," methodology is "the theoretical analysis of the methods appropriate to a field of study" (*American Heritage Dictionary* 2000, 1105, 1006). The methodology of a particular researcher, if consistent, will be singular even while the methods may well be plural.

By *critical* is meant characterized by rational analysis and reflection, useful for making reasonable and informed judgments. A truly critical methodology is one in which the researcher's guiding assumptions have been subjected to reasoned scrutiny and in which hypotheses and other claims are genuinely considered and tested in ways that hold promise of being informative and illuminating. To be critical in this sense, then, means not to be fault-finding but to be truth-seeking. A critical investigation is one in which the outcome is not predetermined by dogmatic commitments but is reached by a process conducive to genuine discovery. "Truly critical scholars will humbly acknowledge that even their most cherished, fundamental assumptions about the world *may be wrong*" (Eddy and Boyd 2007, 83, emphasis in original). An investigation can be critical even if the investigator begins with a definite hypothesis as long as that hypothesis is subjected to rational testing.

By *evangelical* is meant being rooted in the faith perspective of the conservative, traditional Protestant theological tradition commonly known as *evangelicalism*. The next section will define evangelicalism more precisely and set forth the core convictions that characterize evangelical theology and that as a whole distinguish it from other Christian theologies.

3.1.3 The Viability of an Evangelical Critical Methodology

A natural question is whether a methodology that is explicitly or self-consciously evangelical can produce findings of any relevance to Mormons or other non-evangelicals. Would not a study of the Book of Mormon proceeding from

evangelical—and thus overtly non-Mormon—presuppositions merely find what its religious perspective dictates that it should find? Or can an evangelical study of the Book of Mormon engage the subject critically in such a way as to make a contribution of interest to all serious students of the Book of Mormon regardless of their theological and religious convictions?

One contemporary epistemological and methodological perspective that influences public discourse in many fields of inquiry is that in controversial questions, especially those of philosophical or religious significance, it is impossible to find an approach that will allow for the testing of competing hypotheses. In 1984 philosopher of history Behan McCullagh noted that competing hypotheses in history, especially in matters of relevance to religious questions, sometimes reflect competing worldviews. He gave as an example the two hypotheses that Jesus had supernatural powers and that he did not. The historian who favours the hypothesis that Jesus had supernatural powers believes that supernatural powers exist while the historian who denies that Jesus had such powers may deny in principle that any such powers exist. The former historian views accounts of Jesus performing miracles as historically plausible while the latter historian views all such accounts as necessarily implausible. Their hypotheses are *incommensurable*, meaning that they cannot even be compared in terms of evidence because they do not share a common domain of evidence that they interpret differently (McCullagh 1984, 28). To put the matter in legal vernacular, the former historian views such reports as *admissible* evidence while the latter historian does not.

Religiously relevant historical hypotheses that reflect different religious worldviews need not, however, be incommensurable. McCullagh's example may be challenged on the grounds that the sceptical "hypothesis" is really no hypothesis at all, but merely a denial of the hypothesis that Jesus had supernatural powers. A sceptical hypothesis would need to offer a specific alternative description of what happened—for example, the hypothesis that Gentile Christians invented legends about Jesus performing miracles to accommodate belief in Jesus to Greco-Roman beliefs about divine and semi-divine beings. Such a hypothesis would then need to give an account for the same evidence adduced in support of the hypothesis that Jesus had supernatural powers; that is, it would need to account for the reports of Jesus performing miracles.

It is also possible for historians to have somewhat differing religious beliefs while sharing similar enough worldviews that they may still be able to compare their differing hypotheses with respect to the same body of evidence. For example, although Catholics and Protestants disagree theologically over whether Mary was bodily assumed into heaven, they agree that God exists and that Mary is at least spiritually alive in heaven, and they may even agree that God is able to make departed human beings appear to people on earth if he so chooses. This substantial worldview agreement would then allow Catholic and Protestant historians to compare their different hypotheses concerning specific Marian apparitions, even if Protestants are opposed theologically to the idea of such apparitions.

Likewise, as shall be seen in the next section, evangelicals and Mormons have important different theological views on a number of subjects, but they also share some significant theological and worldview beliefs. Such overlapping beliefs may make it feasible for evangelicals and Mormons to compare how their contrary views of the Book of Mormon hold up in terms of the evidence. At the same time, evangelicals who engage in the academic discussion of the Book of Mormon need to think carefully about and articulate clearly their theological and philosophical commitments and perspectives as they relate to this field of inquiry. Evangelicalism and Mormonism are both professing Christian movements. It is therefore important to determine precisely where, if anywhere, Mormons and evangelicals genuinely share methodologically pertinent theological and epistemological presuppositions and where the two perspectives fundamentally diverge.

An evangelical critical methodology, then, need not dogmatically exclude a priori any hypothesis or truth-claim contrary to its confessional theological commitments. Nor on the other hand does advocating a critical methodology imply disapproval of evangelical dogmatic critiques of contrary religious and theological positions such as that of the Mormon religion. Rather, an evangelical critical methodology is a methodology transparent about the evangelical theological perspective from which other truth-claims are viewed while at the same time open to evidence for truth-claims that might challenge that evangelical perspective. The way in which such a perspective may be maintained while examining the Book of Mormon with a genuinely critical openness will be a major theme of this chapter of the dissertation.

3.2 Evangelical Theology and Critical Methodology

3.2.1 Defining Evangelical Theology

As discussed in the preceding section, this study proposes to develop and apply an evangelical critical methodology to the question of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Since the very meaning of *evangelical* is currently a topic of vigorous theological debate, it is necessary to say something about that debate and to define in some specificity what is meant here by evangelical. In one recent book, four authors present four different types of evangelicalism: fundamentalist, confessional, generic, and postconservative evangelicalism (Naselli and Hansen eds. 2011). These types are indicative of a spectrum and are not categories into which all evangelicals neatly fit. Varying statements have also been given of the basic or core theological affirmations of evangelicalism, often with the difficult goal of encompassing all types of evangelicals while still giving a meaningful description.

One common approach to defining evangelicalism is to list features thought to be characteristic of the movement. David Bebbington, for example, identified four "special marks" of evangelical religion: "*conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross" (Bebbington 1989, 2-3). Depending on what one understood by "biblicism," a wide range of differing types of Christianity might claim all four of these hallmarks. According to *An Evangelical Manifesto*, evangelicalism affirms the Incarnation, salvation by grace alone in Christ alone, the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the truth and supreme authority of the Bible, the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life, the hope of Christ's return and eternal kingdom, and the responsibilities of believers to worship, fellowship, discipleship, service, and evangelism (Evangelical Manifesto 2008, 5-6). Such a statement, while admirable and valid in the situation it addresses, does not clearly distinguish evangelicalism theologically from other forms of Christianity.

For the purpose at hand, it is not crucial to assess all such descriptions of evangelicalism but only to state clearly how the terms evangelicalism and evangelical will be used in this study. Of the four types of evangelicalism mentioned

above, the perspective reflected in this study most closely matches what is called *confessional evangelicalism*. Theologically and historically, evangelicalism as defined here is a subset of Protestantism, which in turn is a subset of orthodox or traditional Christianity. It will be convenient to start with the broadest category.

By *orthodox* Christianity is meant in historical and institutional terms that theological heritage of Christian faith that is represented by Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. These three broad streams represent the vast majority of people in the world religion of Christianity throughout history and to this day. Theologically, to be orthodox means to adhere to the essential doctrines of the Christian faith derived from the word of God in Scripture (the Bible) and articulated especially in the second-century Apostles Creed, the fourth-century Nicene Creed, and the fifth-century Chalcedonian Definition (on these, see especially Bray 2009). (Regrettably, many people associated institutionally with the three streams of orthodox Christianity are not theologically orthodox.) The core theological truths expressed in those early creeds are the following:

- *Monotheism*: the worldview according to which one God (the Creator) is alone without origin, self-existent, and all-powerful, who alone brought into existence everything else (the creation), and who sovereignly rules over his creation and miraculously intervenes in it for his own purposes
- *Trinity*: the doctrine that this one God exists eternally in three distinct persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who have made themselves and each other known through acts of revelation in the history preserved in Scripture
- *Incarnation*: the doctrine that the Son, and he alone, condescended to become a human being, Jesus Christ, who was born of a virgin, died on the cross for our sins, rose immortal from the grave, and is henceforth and forever both God and man

There is more to orthodox theology (for admirable surveys see Oden 1992; McGrath 2010), but these three doctrines express the orthodox view of God and of his self-revelation in Jesus Christ.

Protestantism, historically and institutionally, is the stream of Christianity that emerged from the Reformation that took place in Europe in the sixteenth century, led by such figures as Martin Luther and John Calvin. It presupposes the core truths of

orthodox Christianity mentioned above and on that foundation defines more clearly and fully important truths that had been largely obscured by the time of the Reformers. Theologically, to be Protestant means to accept the Reformation doctrines concerning the authority of Scripture and the gospel of salvation. These doctrines are commonly epitomized in a group of Latin theologian slogans using the adjective *sola* ("alone"). The following definitions draw from the *Cambridge Declaration of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals* (Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals 1996):

- *Sola scriptura* (Scripture alone): Scripture is "the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience."

- *Solus Christus* (Christ alone): Human beings are saved from their sins "by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone," that is, by his substitutionary atonement on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

- *Sola gratia* (grace alone): Salvation is in no sense a human work, not even a work in which humans cooperate with God, but completely a work of God in which the Holy Spirit "brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life."

- *Sola fide* (faith alone): The proper response to the saving grace of God in Christ is simply to accept the gift of his righteousness (justification) in full trust and reliance on God's assurance that he accepts us on that basis alone. "Justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone."

- *Soli Deo gloria* (to the glory of God alone): "We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for his glory alone."

In the twentieth century, most of the mainline Protestant denominations accommodated themselves to theological liberalism, a movement that undermined the standards of both orthodox and Protestant theology by denying the historical and doctrinal trustworthiness of Scripture and by reinterpreting Christian theology as symbolic or even mythical in character (cf. Machen 1923). As used here, *evangelicalism* refers to that segment of Protestantism that rejected theological liberalism and that maintained its fidelity to the core theological truths of orthodox Christianity (monotheism, Trinity, and Incarnation) and the historic Reformation doctrines of Scripture and salvation encapsulated in the five *solas* (see Bock 2002a,

37-51, especially 47). That is, evangelicalism in this theological sense is simply "traditional Protestantism" (T. L. Johnson 2004).

The term *fundamentalism* originally was synonymous with evangelicalism (e.g., J. Packer 1958) and is still sometimes used in that way. However, the term has come to designate the most conservative wing of evangelicalism in which certain doctrinal positions (e.g., young-earth creationism and dispensational premillennial eschatology) viewed as non-essential by other evangelicals are commonly treated as essential. Other evangelicals may adhere to these same doctrines but they will typically be more accepting of diverse opinions on such issues. Of particular relevance to this study is the fact that fundamentalism in this narrower sense insists on an approach to biblical interpretation based on a "literal" hermeneutic that requires the text to be understood literally whenever possible and that is generally suspicious if not hostile to conventional methods of biblical criticism, such as source criticism of the Gospels, even as employed by evangelical scholars (illustrated, for example, by Thomas and Farnell eds. 1998; Geisler and Farnell eds. 2014).

The primary focus of confessional evangelical theology following the Second World War has been to articulate and defend an orthodox, Reformational understanding of Christianity against theological liberalism while not slipping into the more strident tendencies of fundamentalism. Evangelical theologies differ on a variety of issues such as predestination and election, church polity, spiritual gifts, and the Millennium (cf. Boyd and Eddy 2009, which includes some viewpoints that others would place outside the pale of evangelicalism). Still, for the purposes of this study one may speak of a recognizable, coherent, confessional evangelical theology articulated in some of the most commonly used contemporary textbooks of systematic theology (e.g., Lewis and Demarest 1996; Erickson 1998; Grudem 2000; Horton 2011; see also Elwell 2001). Henceforth in this study the terms *evangelical* and *evangelicalism* will be used in this confessional context unless stated otherwise.

3.2.2 Evangelical View of Scripture

The subject of this study is a passage in the Book of Mormon, which Mormons regard as scripture. It is necessary, then, to describe the evangelical view of Scripture and to consider how this view may impact or impinge on the critical study of the Book of Mormon.

The evangelical approach to Scripture avoids the two extremes of liberalism and fundamentalism as defined above. The Chicago Statements on Biblical Inerrancy and Biblical Hermeneutics (1978, 1981) are representative expressions of a contemporary evangelical view of Scripture. In this view, Scripture is fully inspired by God and at the same time fully human in its production and expression, analogous to the doctrine of the Incarnation in which Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human. "We affirm that as Christ is God and man in one Person, so Scripture is, indivisibly, God's word in human language" (Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, Art. II). For evangelicals, the full divine inspiration of Scripture entails its full trustworthiness and truth in all that it teaches—what evangelicals often call its *inerrancy*—while the full humanity of Scripture entails that it comes to us through different authors, reflecting different historical situations and cultural contexts, expressed in a variety of literary genres and in different styles. Both aspects of the nature of Scripture must be taken fully into account if Scripture is to be properly interpreted. Interpreters must be careful not to pit the humanity of Scripture against its historical trustworthiness and theological coherence, as for example Peter Enns appeared to do in his book *Inspiration and Incarnation* (Enns 2005, 17-18, 110-11, 167-68; see the critique of Enns's use of the incarnational analogy in Carson 2006).

Moreover, faithful and informed interpreters will have somewhat varying views as to how this dual nature of Scripture is to be explained as well as how best to understand specific passages and statements in Scripture. The fact of such interpretive variations does not call for scepticism or agnosticism with regard to understanding Scripture. Earl Radmacher struck an admirable balance in his introduction to the papers associated with the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics when he observed that "we still do see through a glass darkly" but "we are able to see sufficiently of the glory of the Lord" in Scripture (Radmacher and Preus eds. 1982, xiii). Scripture is inerrant, but human understanding of Scripture, even with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, is not.

Mormons deny the inerrancy not only of the Bible but also of their own additional scriptures (see Millet, Olson, Skinner, and Top 2011, 320-22). The Book of Mormon's title page warns readers not to use errors in the book as justification for rejecting its revealed truths: "And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at

the judgment-seat of Christ." As Hugh Nibley stated, "The Book of Mormon, though transmitted and translated by divine ministration, was an earthly book, written by the hands of men, as is all scripture, and hence apt to contain the mistakes of men" (Nibley 1972). William Hamblin agreed, commenting that the Book of Mormon may contain "historical or scientific mistakes" (Hamblin 1994, 456).

One might, from an evangelical perspective, argue that if Mormons acknowledge that their scriptures are errant then that errancy disqualifies them as authentically inspired. Although the theological point is valid, its cogency or effectiveness as an objection to the Book of Mormon or other LDS scriptures is dubious. The objection faults those scriptures for failing to meet expectations that Mormons view as unwarranted. Furthermore, the objection can be substantiated only by citing specific apparent errors in the Book of Mormon, a method that evangelicals generally dismiss when applied to the Bible. That is, evangelicals typically maintain that alleged errors in the Bible are only apparent, even in cases where a definitive solution eludes scholars, so that belief in biblical inerrancy is a faith position to be maintained despite such difficulties. "Be fully persuaded in your own mind that an adequate explanation exists, even though you have not yet found it" (G. Archer 1982, 15). If evangelicals take this stance toward the Bible, they invite the criticism that they employ a double standard if they refuse to give the Book of Mormon the same benefit of the doubt. In short, while from a dogmatic evangelical stance the admitted errancy of the Book of Mormon is enough to disqualify it as scripture, an evangelical critical methodology will need to assess the Book of Mormon's claims in another way. This does not mean that errors in the Book of Mormon are of no relevance in critically assessing its truth claims, but that the mere existence of any error in the Book of Mormon is insufficient for such purpose.

Another major difference between evangelical and LDS views of scripture is the larger collection of writings that Mormons regard as scripture. The LDS Church recognizes "the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price" as scripture and designates these writings as "the standard works" (*Gospel Principles* 2009, 45). By contrast, of course, evangelical Christians recognize only the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments in the Bible as scripture (Oden 1992, 1:335-36; Grudem 2000, 54-72; Horton 2011, 151-85; Blomberg 2014, 43-82). Furthermore, for Mormons the category of scripture is open-

ended. Not only is it possible for new texts to be added to the standard works, but Mormons also believe that their living prophets speak inspired words that also carry the same authority as scripture (ibid., 46). Thus, Mormons believe that "the canon is open, by God's design, and far more expansive than the traditional Judeo-Christian canon" (Millet, Olson, Skinner, and Top 2011, 93).

The matter of the expanded LDS canon of scripture goes to the heart of the theological challenge posed by the Book of Mormon. If its claim to be inspired scripture is true, then not only is the canon open but that canon in its expanded form reveals Joseph Smith to be a prophet of God—and by implication the LDS Church to be the true church. As with the matter of the inerrancy of Scripture, it is possible and reasonable to reject the LDS claim of extrabiblical scripture theologically on the basis of its incompatibility with the orthodox canon of Scripture, which traditionally and properly understands the canon to be closed (see C. Hill 2009; Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles 2009, 3-31). Another legitimate theological critique of the Book of Mormon as canonical is to show that its teaching or the teaching of its supposed inspired translator Joseph Smith is at odds with the teaching of the known books of Scripture in the Bible. These dogmatic objections to the LDS canon, however, as theologically sound as they are, constitute a priori arguments against the Book of Mormon. What is needed is an assessment of the Book of Mormon that does not simply assume at the outset that it cannot be scripture. Furthermore, while the theological objections directly respond to the claim that the Book of Mormon is canonical scripture, they do not directly engage the claim that it is an ancient text. A cogent critique of the Book of Mormon must address the issue of its authenticity, which is an historical question. Of course, there is no reason why evangelicals may not raise *both* historical and theological objections to the Book of Mormon.

3.2.3 Evangelical View of Jesus Christ

3.2.3.1 The Person of Jesus Christ

Since this study concerns the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon's account of Jesus Christ preaching in the Americas following his ascension, some consideration should be given to the similarities and differences between the evangelical and LDS views of Jesus Christ. In all respects relevant to this study, the evangelical view of Jesus Christ is simply the orthodox Christology shared by all

conservative Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Christians, and traditional Protestants. Theologically fundamental to orthodox Christianity is the confession that Jesus is the Son of God, second person of the Trinity, eternally and fully deity, one God with the Father (John 1:1, 18; 10:28-30; 20:28-31; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Col. 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:8-12; 2 Peter 1:1-2; see Bowman and Komoszewski 2007; Morgan and Peterson 2011). In the Incarnation the divine Son became a fully human being, like all other mortal human beings constitutionally, yet without sin (John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15; 1 John 4:1-2). He was conceived in the womb of a Jewish virgin named Mary by the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and born of that virgin with the given, human name Jesus (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:31-37; 2:4-7, 21). He experienced a full range of human temptations and yet never sinned (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:1-13; John 8:27, 46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21-22).

Mormons agree with some aspects of this orthodox Christology and generally speaking disagree with other aspects of it. (For two rather different LDS presentations of Mormon Christology in context, see Millet 2005; Harrell 2011.) They agree that Jesus experienced temptation and yet lived a sinless life. The LDS Church affirms that Jesus was a God prior to his conception and birth on the earth; specifically, it identifies the pre-mortal Christ as Jehovah, the God of Israel. However, its understanding of Christ's deity is radically different from that of orthodox Christian theology. Instead of the Trinitarian doctrine of three persons existing eternally as one God (one divine Being), Mormon theology views the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (its preferred term for the Holy Spirit) as three divine beings united in purpose in one "Godhead." In effect, as Joseph Smith explicitly put it, the three are regarded as "three Gods" (J. Smith 1938, 370). All human beings, angels, demons, and other spirits were the spirit sons and daughters of Heavenly Father (and his divine wife, the "heavenly mother"), whom Mormons call Elohim; and Jehovah, the pre-mortal Christ, was his firstborn spirit son. Our heavenly parents have glorious, immortal bodies of flesh and bones, and they send their spirit children to earth to live as mortals in order to progress spiritually with the hope of one day becoming fully like them—that is, becoming Gods (*Gospel Principles* 2009, 9-11, 15-16, 275, 277).

Although the LDS Church formally affirms that Jesus was born of a virgin, its explanation of what this means raises serious doubts as to whether one can properly say that LDS theology accepts the virginal conception and birth of Christ. According to LDS doctrine, Jesus in his physical body is the literal offspring in the flesh of Heavenly Father (who is himself a physical being, as already noted) and of Mary his mother. "Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father. That is why He is called the Only Begotten Son" (*Gospel Principles* 2009, 53). "The body in which He performed His mission in the flesh was sired by that same Holy Being we worship as God, our Eternal Father" (Benson 2001, 8). It should be acknowledged that most Mormons shy away from drawing the natural implications regarding Heavenly Father's relationship with Mary.

Ironically, none of this highly unorthodox Christology appears in the Book of Mormon. It affirms that heavenly choirs will sing unceasing praises "unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God" (Mormon 7:7; likewise 2 Ne. 31:21; Alma 11:44). The Father is not the physical parent of Jesus Christ but is instead, in some passages at least, the divine or spiritual aspect of the person of Christ. Jesus is said to be "the Father and the Son—the Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—and they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth" (Mos. 15:2-4). Later the Book of Mormon quotes the preincarnate Christ as stating, "Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son" (Ether 3:14). Other Book of Mormon passages appear to reflect a more traditional theology in which the Father and the Son are personally distinct from one another—notably in 3 Nephi 11-18, the passage that includes the Book of Mormon version of the Sermon on the Mount that is the focus of this study. Interpretations of the Book of Mormon's doctrine of God vary greatly; some scholars interpret it as essentially a form of monarchianism or modalism (Kirkland 1989, 35-36; Vogel 1989; M. M. Charles 1993; Widmer 2000, 23-41; Huggins 2006), while some conservative LDS scholars dispute this view (M. S. Tanner 1995, 24-34; Bruening and Paulsen 2001, 123-32) or even try to find latent hints in the Book of Mormon of a theology consistent with the later LDS polytheism (Peterson 1998; Gardner 2003). BYU scholar Charles Harrell, who acknowledges doctrinal development in Joseph Smith's

writings, finds "classical trinitarian" statements in the Book of Mormon as well as statements that are "modalistic" (Harrell 2011, 110-111).

3.2.3.2 The Earthly Work of Jesus Christ

It is of particular relevance for this study dealing with a supposed post-resurrection appearance of Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon to compare evangelical and Mormon views of Christ's earthly activities. Evangelical theology bases its understanding of the earthly life and activities of Jesus entirely on the New Testament, particularly the four Gospels. Jesus was born in Bethlehem not long before the death of Herod the Great, and therefore no earlier than about 6 BC and no later than the very beginning of 4 BC (Hoehner 1977, 11-27). He lived for a short time as an infant in Egypt, grew up in Nazareth, preached in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, and was killed just outside Jerusalem. Orthodox Christians reject legends and speculations that Jesus travelled as a young adult to faraway lands such as India and returned to Galilee as a guru teaching the wisdom of the East (Groothuis 1996, 119-51). He was arrested and tried at Passover time before both the Jewish Sanhedrin and the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate, and he was executed on a Roman cross in either AD 30 or 33 (see especially Hoehner 1977; cf. R. E. Brown 1994, 2:1373-78 and the references cited there). Jesus rose from the dead on the third day (traditionally and properly understood to have been a Sunday, following a Friday crucifixion), appeared to his disciples over a period of forty days, and then ascended to heaven (Luke 24; Acts 1:1-11).

In broad strokes the LDS Church agrees with the historical facts just recited. It accepts the four Gospels and generally has taken a fairly conservative view of the life of Christ. Mormons believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose physically from the grave, and they affirm his bodily ascension into heaven. The traditional Book of Mormon chronology (which appears in current print and online editions) accepts a date of AD 1 for the birth of Christ and AD 34 for the death and resurrection of Christ (see 3 Ne. 1:1-4, 13; 8:2-5; and the footnotes at those places). These chronological discrepancies are consistent with popular notions (even more so at the time the Book of Mormon was published than now) of the chronology of Christ's life, though LDS scholars are aware of the problem and have suggested some ways to resolve it (J. Pratt 1992, 171). Other than these relatively minor

discrepancies, the Book of Mormon presupposes the general accuracy of the Gospel accounts of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

The most significant difference between the orthodox and evangelical view of Christ's earthly activity and the LDS view concerns Christ's activity after his ascension. According to the Book of Mormon, in the material of focal concern for this study, sometime after his ascension Jesus Christ appeared in the Americas, preached the Sermon on the Mount, quoted passages from the Old Testament, chose twelve disciples, and established a church parallel to the one established in the Old World (3 Ne. 11-26). Since the primary text for this study (3 Ne. 12-14) is set in this context of post-ascension appearances of Christ, it will be necessary to assess both the historicity of those reported appearances and their coherence with what the New Testament says about Christ's ascension.

Here again, Mormons share some relevant beliefs with evangelicals even while also holding some different and even conflicting beliefs. Both Mormons and evangelicals agree that Jesus Christ died and rose bodily from the grave and that he appeared to people after his resurrection. Evangelicals may, then, agree that Jesus *could* appear to other people if he so chooses (even if they also deny that he *would* do so). In principle, then, evangelicals could agree that it would be *possible* for the risen Jesus Christ to appear to people in the Western Hemisphere, if he chose to do so. Evangelicals may deny that such appearances are theologically consistent with New Testament teaching, but they need not assume that such appearances are impossible when examining historically the claim that Jesus appeared to people in the Western Hemisphere as narrated in the Book of Mormon.

3.2.4 Evangelical View of Miracles and the Supernatural

As is already evident from what has been said, both evangelicals and Mormons believe that God does miracles, such as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Both religious traditions accept revelation—communication from God to human beings—as both possible and actual. Furthermore, both affirm the existence of spirits and angels—beings other than God who populate a higher or transcendent realm (commonly called "heaven") and who can appear to humans here on earth. In short, both believe in a variety of phenomena that may be described as miraculous or supernatural.

Many modern historians either dismiss out of hand all reports of miraculous events or, more commonly, maintain that historians cannot comment on whether any reported miracle occurred (for a survey of contemporary examples, see Licona 2010, 153-89). It is not uncommon to find historians and even theologians asserting that "historical scholarship cannot deal with supernatural events and events that are without analogy" (Thiessen and Winter 2002, 210). The reality is that when scholars refuse in principle to consider the supernatural, they will very often in practice seek natural explanations even for otherwise credible miracle reports. Recent developments call into question this conventional view that miraculous events fall outside the purview of historical study. Three such developments stand out.

First, philosophers have subjected the foundational assumptions of this historical naturalism—assumptions that go back to the Enlightenment philosopher David Hume (1777)—to thorough critique (most notably Earman 2000). Hume had argued that miracles were by definition so contrary to human experience and so improbable that a naturalistic explanation is always more credible. Hume's argument begs the question by practically defining miracles out of existence and *a priori* reaches its conclusion by insisting that no amount of evidence could ever establish the credibility of a miracle report.

Second, biblical scholars have shown that the application of common methods of critical analysis of the Gospel texts used by liberal scholars supports the credibility of their characterization of Jesus as a miracle worker (see especially Twelftree 1999). Reports of Jesus performing miracles of healing in particular show up in what scholars commonly regard as the earliest source material of the Gospels, in multiple Gospels and Gospel sources, and are often framed in ways unlikely to have been pious fictions by later Christians (e.g., Jesus performing a healing on behalf of a synagogue official). It simply is not possible to "peel away the onion" of the Gospel sources to find a naturalistic Jesus who did not perform miracles.

Third, in a landmark study, New Testament scholar Craig Keener has attacked the root assumption of modern scepticism about miracles, namely, Hume's assumption that the New Testament miracles are contrary to common human experience. After thoroughly reviewing the philosophical flaws in Hume's arguments against the credibility of miracles (Keener 2011, 83-208), Keener refuted Hume's root assumption by cataloguing evidence showing that experiences of miracles,

especially miracles of healing, have been extremely common in many cultures and periods and are pervasive throughout the world today. Keener discussed numerous documented examples from various parts of the world outside the West (211-358) and in Western Christianity throughout church history (359-507). His catalogue of miracles concluded with a chapter on reports of healings of the blind and the lame, raisings of the dead, and nature miracles (508-599). Finally, Keener carefully engaged possible non-supernatural explanations before defending the conclusion that at least many of the reports are best explained as actual miracles (603-759). Keener effectively turned the naturalistic principle of "analogy" (reflected in Thiessen and Winter's comment quoted above) on its head: the types of miracles reported in the New Testament have numerous analogies from eyewitness testimonies of multitudes of people in both the past and present and so cannot be dismissed as incredible. "There therefore seems no reason, based on the principle of historical analogy, to deny that first-century eyewitnesses could have believed that they saw Jesus heal blind eyes, made paralytics walk, or raise the dead, all of which cures eyewitnesses also claim today" (761).

Evangelicals and Mormons are on solid ground, then, in affirming the reality of the supernatural and in confessing the historical occurrence of miracles, especially miracles connected with the person of Jesus Christ. While they share some common beliefs concerning miracles, the LDS worldview is so different from that of orthodox Christianity that Mormons typically understand the supernatural rather differently than do most evangelicals and other orthodox believers. In the LDS worldview, Gods, spirits, and mortal humans are all part of the same "species" at different stages of development. "Gods and humans represent a single divine lineage, the same species of being, although they and he are at different stages of progress" (Robinson 1992, 549). According to one of Joseph Smith's revelations, spirit is itself a more refined type of matter: "There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; we cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter" (D&C 131:7-8). Thus, whereas orthodox Christians commonly posit a duality between the realms of matter and spirit, between the natural and supernatural, Mormonism qualifies such a duality. Rather than define a miracle in terms of divine intervention into the natural order, Mormons typically prefer to define

a miracle as "a beneficial event brought about through divine power that mortals do not understand and of themselves cannot duplicate" (Hedengren 1992, 908). Generally speaking, though, the difference between orthodox Christians and Mormons here is a difference in how miraculous events are interpreted. They agree that events commonly described as miracles, such as medically inexplicable healings, resurrections of people from the dead, and other actions performed by God, spirits, or other heavenly beings can and do occur.

Since evangelicals affirm the validity of divine revelation, angels, and miracles, they cannot object to the Book of Mormon on the basis of *a priori* scepticism of the supernatural. Robert Millet complained, "Too often the real issue—the subtle but certain undergirding assumption of those who question the historicity of the Book of Mormon, in whole or in part—is a denial of the supernatural, a refusal to admit of divine intervention, of revelation and miracles and predictive prophecy" (Millet 2009, 73). Millet's complaint pertains to scepticism not so much about the narrative of the Book of Mormon as about the circumstances of its modern origins. Joseph Smith's claim that he was given the gold plates of the Book of Mormon by an angel named Moroni (see above, §1.1.1) is especially in view here. As Hugh Nibley put it, "The dice are always loaded before the game begins: It is not the Book of Mormon, but the Angel Moroni who is on trial" (Nibley 1989, 128). The complaint is not entirely idle. Anthony Grafton, in his academic study of forgery, opined that "tales of texts discovered in miraculous circumstances directly reveal" that the texts are the work of forgers—and in an endnote mentions the Book of Mormon as an example (Grafton 1990, 8, 130 n. 2). By this standard, of course, one must regard the Ten Commandments as a forgery.

Although wholesale dismissal of the supernatural is not an option for evangelicals, at least some forms of evangelical theology would raise *a priori* objections to the supernatural elements of Joseph Smith's account of the finding and translating of the Book of Mormon. For example, some modern evangelicals adhere to more or less thoroughgoing forms of *cessationism*, the belief that all miraculous spiritual gifts, and perhaps miracles in general, ceased after the close of the apostolic era. Such cessationists would naturally object to Joseph Smith's new revelations and other miraculous claims on theological grounds. However, there is a spectrum of views on this question among evangelicals (Grudem ed. 1996; Boyd

and Eddy 2009, 235-48) and it is best not to pre-judge the question of the Book of Mormon by dogmatically rejecting the possibility of modern miracles—a stance that would seem all the less advisable in the light of Keener's study described above (Keener 2011).

Evangelicals may affirm the reality of the supernatural and concede the hypothetical possibility of modern miracles without becoming credulous regarding extra-biblical miracle accounts. Even apart from evidential considerations, not all supernatural claims are equally plausible. This is one implication of Keener's argument that the kinds of miracles reported in the New Testament are credible in light of the frequency with which similar miracles have occurred throughout church history and today. Accounts of individuals being dramatically healed in answer to prayers are inherently more credible than accounts of gemstones and gold dust raining on attendees at revival meetings. An evangelical critical methodology will consider the types of supernatural manifestations that are reported, their frequencies, the circumstances of their occurrences, the coherence of the theological explanations proffered, and other such matters when assessing reports of supernatural visitations or miraculous events. Such a critical assessment of the miraculous elements of Joseph Smith's story may fairly be included in conjunction with an engagement with the internal evidence of the Book of Mormon text. Thus one may, to use Nibley's words, put both the angel Moroni and the Book of Mormon "on trial" as co-defenders.

3.2.5 Evangelical Theology and Critical Methodology: Conclusion

In some respects, evangelical theology poses significant objections to the Book of Mormon. Evangelicalism regards Scripture as inerrant and the canon of Scripture as complete, in contrast to the LDS claims that all scripture is prone to error and that the Book of Mormon is ancient scripture revealed in modern times to clarify and supplement the Bible. Evangelicals accept the orthodox view of the person of Christ, a view that contrasts starkly with LDS Christology even though, ironically, the Book of Mormon comes close to the orthodox view. In other relevant respects, evangelical and LDS beliefs at least appear to have significant overlap. Both communities profess to be Christian, regard the Bible as God's word (though with some heavy qualification for Mormons), accept the possibility of miracles, and

believe that angels exist and can communicate with humans. Both believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, appeared to human beings on earth, and ascended into heaven. Even within these areas of partial doctrinal agreement, though, there are significant differences. Of special relevance and importance is the Book of Mormon's claim that Christ descended to earth and established a church in the Americas shortly after his ascension. This claim is the immediate context of the passage of the Book of Mormon that is the focus of this study.

It is possible and legitimate to critique the Book of Mormon on purely theological grounds in order to show its incompatibility with evangelical theology. In particular, evangelicals rightly insist that only the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the written word of God (see above, §3.2.2). Thus the Bible, as true Scripture, is properly regarded as the authoritative norm by which the doctrines and claims of any other writings should be judged. Such a dogmatic critique has value for the purpose of showing evangelical Christians that they should not accept the Book of Mormon as the word of God. However, in order to show non-evangelicals why the Book of Mormon should not be accepted as God's word, an approach is needed that while not compromising evangelical convictions does not depend logically on evangelical theological premises. Such an approach would also have value because it would address directly the LDS claim that the Book of Mormon is itself a powerful argument against those evangelical theological beliefs. An approach that satisfies these conditions is what is meant here by an *evangelical* critical methodology for examining the claims of the Book of Mormon.

3.3 Historical Inquiry and Critical Methodology

3.3.1 Historical Knowledge and Critical Realism

This study is a critical inquiry or investigation into the authenticity of a speech attributed to Jesus in a specific passage in the Book of Mormon. As such, it may be characterized as a study in historical Jesus research, albeit one dealing with a text not often considered in that field. The study therefore is in large measure an exercise in the discipline of history. Any such study, but especially a study pertaining to a highly controversial religious text about the most influential religious figure in

human history, invites scrutiny with regard to its methodological assumptions about history.

Since this study is an avowedly evangelical critical inquiry into the Book of Mormon, it is important here to explain how this inquiry will approach historical questions in a way that would not also be inimical to evangelical faith. Specifically, the approach to history must be one that is serviceable for the inquiry but that would not if applied to the Bible be necessarily destructive of evangelical confidence in its historical reliability. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a full-orbed defence of this approach to historical knowledge; instead, what will be done here is to describe the approach taken and to show that it is a common approach favoured by evangelicals in regards to historical study of Jesus Christ and the Bible.

Academic debates in the philosophy of history currently rage over the very possibility of the knowledge of the past, with the competing views generally arrayed along the modern/postmodern fault line (Jenkins 1997; Clark 2003). More or less paralleling this fault line is the long-running objectivist/subjectivist debate concerning the nature of knowledge, specifically historical knowledge. In the stereotypical forms of these contrasting views, objectivism is the belief that knowledge is entirely free of personal perspective while subjectivism is the belief that knowledge is entirely captive to personal perspective. A pure or radical version of either epistemology is indefensible and many if not most philosophers and historians today seek a *media via* of some kind.

For instance, one influential study on the nature of historical knowledge defended a "qualified objectivity" that does not fall into naïve objectivism or positivism. Knowledge is always the knowledge of a knower and so never escapes some subjectivity; nor can scientists or historians be "neutral" in their work. "Neither admission undermines the viability of stable bodies of knowledge that can be communicated, built upon, and subjected to testing" (Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob 1994, 254). The authored define historical objectivity as "an interactive relationship between an inquiring subject and an external object" (259, 261). "The incontrovertible existence of various interpretations of past events by no means proves the relativist's case, but it certainly demands that everyone shed the positivist's notion of historical truth" (265).

Ronald H. Nash, one of the leading evangelical philosophers of history in the twentieth century, defended a similar position. He argued that what he calls hard objectivism and hard relativism should both be rejected as ways of thinking about historical study. Hard objectivism falsely claims that it is possible for historians to view the past without any specific, personal perspective in a "value-free" manner. Hard relativism falsely claims that the historian's perspective makes it impossible to know anything truly about the past. Nash suggested a mediating position, which he said can be articulated as either soft objectivism or soft relativism. According to this mediating view, historians do have perspectives but can learn truth about the past since their perspectives are open to critical revision (Nash 1984, 80-82). "Even though complete objectivity may be an impossible dream, historical investigation can in principle be freed from the historian's subjective interests and biases. To the extent that historical objectivity is understood in the sense of being open to critical investigation and re-examination, it seems that historical objectivity is possible" (90).

N. T. Wright is an influential New Testament scholar who has also defended a view of historical knowledge that balances objective and subjective dimensions. He described his epistemology as "a form of critical realism" that affirms the possibility of knowing "realities independent of the knower" while it acknowledges that this knowledge "is never independent of the knower" (Wright 1992, 35). Critical realism is a term taken from the philosophy of science referring to epistemologies of science that view science as yielding genuine knowledge of the natural world while recognizing that such knowledge is always subject to revision and even disconfirmation by new or more precise data (see M. Archer et. al. 1998). Wright and others before (e.g., B. Meyer 1989) and after him have applied this epistemological concept to biblical studies without naively assuming that the discipline may be viewed simply or without qualification as another science.

According to Wright, an historical hypothesis is an "*explanatory story*" and must to be successful fit within a larger "story" of the world, that is, a worldview (Wright 1992, 43). Wright rejected the "hard-and-fast distinction between objective and subjective" knowledge in favor of what he describes as a "*relational* epistemology" (44, 45). Within this general critical-realist epistemology, Wright took the view that history, as a human discipline, "is neither 'bare facts' nor 'subjective interpretations,' but is rather *the meaningful narrative of events and intentions*" (82).

The historian considers differing interpretations and discovers "that some angles of vision do less justice to the information than others" (91).

Other Christian scholars have commented favourably on critical realism as a method in biblical and theological studies. Stewart Kelly agreed with Wright that "we should adopt some version of Critical Realism which steers a middle course between the illusion of Objectivism and the many problems of Postmodern Relativism" (Kelly 2008, 61; see also McGrath 1999; Moritz 2000). Darrell Bock, a conservative evangelical New Testament scholar, likewise has advocated "critical realism" as the most cogent approach to knowledge in theological scholarship. "By 'critical realism' I mean that there is a reality external to us. We have awareness and knowledge of it, so that our accounts of reality at least roughly correspond with it, though we're not infallible or exhaustive in our knowledge of it" (Bock 2002a, 22). The approach is similar to a "chastened modernism" but in the evangelical context treats the Bible as foundational or primary for knowledge even while acknowledging the impossibility of proving everything in the Bible beyond doubt (22-23). It is *realism* because it affirmed that knowledge of the real world is possible; it is *critical* because it takes cognizance of the fact that human knowledge is always subject to testing and correction (24). Robert Webb argued that critical realism allows the historian to appreciate the insights of postmodernism "without descending into total relativism and self-referentialism" (Webb 2010, 30). Critical realism provides "a way to mediate…between modernist and postmodernist historiography" so as to move forward with the task of doing history (31).

Evangelical theologian Scot McKnight has made the case for an approach to historical knowledge very similar to that of Nash in a chapter on historical Jesus studies, historiography, and theology (McKnight 2005, 3-46). McKnight distinguished "three strands of historiography among historical Jesus scholars," namely, modernism, postmodernism, and a "mediating" approach that can be described as either a "chastened" or "enlightened" version of either modernism or postmodernism (McKnight 2005, 5 n. 9; 13).

In their landmark study responding to contemporary scepticism concerning the possibility of knowing anything significant about the Jesus of history, Paul Eddy and Gregory Boyd directly engaged objections to such knowledge from postmodernism. They acknowledged that "the postmodern turn has, at the very

least, served to sharpen our awareness that historical claims are never purely objective, are always probabilistic, and thus are open to further questioning. And this fact should serve to make us more humble and self-critical when making and defending historiographical truth-claims" (Eddy and Boyd 2007, 17). This does not mean, however, that one should "jettison the possibility of arriving at, or even striving for, a more or less objective understanding of the past," since to reject that possibility entails denying that some historical claims are historically legitimate and some are not (18). The authors pointed out that complete scepticism about all historical claims implies that one has no context of knowledge within which to detect propaganda or errors—the very sorts of phenomena that sceptics cite as evidence of bias (19). "Considerations about the difficulty of striving for objective truth have value only if they serve to make us more vigilant and humble in striving for objective truth" (21).

In his study of historiography and the resurrection of Jesus, Michael Licona thoroughly surveyed the field of philosophy of history and critically engaged postmodernist views of history. According to Licona, despite the popularity of postmodernist anti-realism, "most historians are *realists*" and maintain that "the truth of narratives can be judged for accuracy" (Licona 2010, 79). Due to the difficulty of proving realism and the fact that all human knowledge of the past is fallible and subject to correction, however, this historical realism is "chastened" (86). Most historians now eschew both "naïve realism" that expects correct method always to yield accurate history and the anti-realism of postmodernism "that holds that responsible method cannot lead us to accurate historical knowledge." The middle way is a chastened realism that pursues genuine historical knowledge while recognizing that such knowledge will be fallible and have "varying degrees of certainty" (89).

The works of Nash, Wright, Bock, McKnight, Eddy and Boyd, Webb, and Licona exemplify a stable, epistemologically aware approach to the issue of historical knowledge that have been serving evangelical historians and biblical scholars well. Its application to the field of historical Jesus studies—in which Bock, Boyd, and Wright have been particularly prominent—has been fruitful in defending the claim that the Gospels and other ancient sources yield genuine historical information about Jesus. This approach is critical rather than dogmatic, charting a course between the extremes of naïve realism and naïve relativism, or pure

objectivism and pure subjectivism. Genuine knowledge of history is possible and actual, but due to incorrigible limitations it is always partial, subject to correction, and less than absolutely certain.

This chastened or critical realism does not solve all epistemological problems with regard to historical knowledge, but it provides a framework in which historical inquiry may be pursued with a measure of confidence that such knowledge may be attained. Although human observers and interpreters inevitably bring assumptions and perspectives to their task, these limitations are not irremediable impediments to knowledge, much less justification for biased treatment of an issue. Recognizing the existence of such limitations is the first step toward minimizing any distorting influence they may have in one's inquiry. "What is needed is not so much frank admission and then a jolly carrying on as usual, as if admission is justification, but instead the willingness to let our presuppositions (Subject) be challenged by the evidence (Object)" (McKnight 2005, 33).

While acknowledging the difficulty of overcoming biases, Licona suggested various ways in which historians can and often do work to manage or minimize the limitations of their own perspectives. These tools for "transcending" one's "horizons" include attention to method, openness about one's methods and assumptions, submitting one's views to critical review from those who do not share them, making "historical bedrock" facts the starting point of one's research, and learning to appreciate the reasoning and force of alternative views from the perspective of their advocates (Licona 2010, 50-62). That a researcher who utilizes these tools still cannot claim to be totally free of bias does not negate his conclusions or invalidate his reasoning. "It must be asserted most strongly that to discover that a particular writer has a 'bias' tells us nothing whatever about the value of the information he or she presents. It merely bids us be aware of the bias (and of our own, for that matter), and to assess the material according to as many sources as we can" (Wright 1992, 89).

3.3.2 Historical Criticism

The task of investigating the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon (or of any part of it) is an exercise in what is commonly called *historical criticism*. Historical criticism refers to "the study of any narrative which purports to convey

historical information in order to determine what actually happened" (Marshall 1977, 126). It therefore "includes any attempt to understand and evaluate the historical truth claims of texts" (Goldsworthy 2006, 140). LDS scholar William Hamblin has noted that evangelicals have rarely if ever used historical methods in their criticism of the Book of Mormon (Hamblin 1994, 450). That is precisely what this study will do.

Historical criticism has, of course, been a significant part of biblical studies, especially since the mid-eighteenth century. The findings of biblical scholars engaged in historical critical study have often been antagonistic to the evangelical view of the Bible. The question arises, then, whether evangelicals engaged in historical criticism of the Book of Mormon are taking an approach to it that they would not regard as legitimate when applied to the Bible.

Much depends on exactly what one understands historical criticism to entail. Reformed philosopher Alvin Plantinga defined "historical biblical criticism" as "an effort to try to determine from the standpoint of reason alone what the Scriptural teachings are and whether they are true" (Plantinga 2003, 27). By this definition an evangelical Christian must reject historical biblical criticism, but it is not a standard definition. More often historical criticism is commonly equated with what is often called the "historical-critical method," an approach to the Bible and religious texts that presupposes that history is part of the closed system of the natural world and that all events of the past must be analogous to events of present human observation and experience. To put the matter bluntly, the method, so defined, assumes that the supernatural is unreal, that miracles do not happen, and that God is not an active participant in history (cf. Soulen and Soulen 2011, 88-89). Again, evangelical Christians can have no part of this so-called "historical-critical method" (see the famous critique in G. Maier 1977). Nor should they, in light of the evidence that miracles have occurred throughout church history and are happening throughout the world today (see Keener 2011 and the discussion of this important work above, §3.2.4). More subtly, some evangelicals argue that the historical-critical method implicitly denies the authority of the biblical texts by placing the interpreter who uses the method in the position of judging those texts (e.g., B. D. Smith 1994).

Evangelical biblical scholars are sympathetic with these concerns but generally view such objectionable assumptions as abuses of historical criticism rather than as inevitable or necessary elements. "One need not discard the tool

because of its abuse" (Guelich 1982, 23). All of the biblical scholars discussed in the previous section seek to make judicious use of the standard methods or tools of historical criticism free of the naturalistic and rationalistic assumptions that so commonly drive scholars to their conclusions. As Darrell Bock observed, "Although historical criticism has often given erroneous answers to historical questions, it has often asked the right kinds of questions but pursued answers in misdirected ways" (Bock 2002b, 161).

LDS scholar William Hamblin has pointed out that there is no universally accepted understanding of the historical-critical method (Hamblin 1994, 436-37). Rather than viewing historical-critical method as something one must either accept or reject, it may be better to think not in terms of "a single method" but rather of "an array of disciplines" by which scholars do historical study of texts from a variety of perspectives (Hagner and Young 2009, 11). The evangelical scholar who practices these disciplines appropriately is not asserting or assuming his autonomy in relation to God but is rather pursuing the truth in humble confidence in God as the Lord of truth. Evangelicals can be confident that the true Scriptures in which God speaks his Word will be vindicated in any honest inquiry into the origins and historical contexts of those writings.

There are at least five reasons why evangelical biblical scholars should make good use of the tools of historical criticism. The first is that the Bible itself encourages its readers to take questions about historicity and the authenticity of their sources of information seriously in matters of faith (cf. Barton 2010, 35). Luke explained to Theophilus that his Gospel was based on eyewitness testimony and was the fruit of Luke's own examination of the sources and facts (Luke 1:1-4). The disciple whom Jesus loved assured his readers that he was himself an eyewitness of the events he narrated, especially the crucial events of Jesus' death and resurrection (John 19:34-35; 21:24-25). Paul listed individuals and groups who had seen the risen Christ as confirmation of the fact of his resurrection (1 Cor. 15:5-8). He warned the Thessalonians not to be deceived by pseudonymous letters claiming to be from him or his associates (2 Thess. 2:1-2). He also warned Timothy that some people would turn away from the truth and would accept myths in its place (2 Tim. 4:4). Peter assured his readers that what he and the other apostles had proclaimed about Jesus Christ were not tales they had invented but facts to which

they were eyewitnesses (2 Peter 1:16). Evangelical scholars who study the biblical writings historically are simply taking seriously the value and importance of historical truth that these kinds of biblical statements inculcate.

Second, historical inquiry into the human origins of the biblical texts is in keeping with a sound understanding of the nature of Scripture. As explained earlier (§3.2.2), Scripture is "God's word in human language" (Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, Art. II). It is both divine and human in origin and nature, analogous to the incarnate Christ who is both God and man. As human, Scripture is communicated in human, historical contexts, originates in specific places, times, and circumstances, and is produced by real human writers for the benefit of real human readers. Historical criticism takes this human dimension of Scripture seriously. "To deny that the Bible should be studied through the use of literary and critical methodologies is to treat the Bible as less than human, less than historical, and less than literature" (Black and Dockery 1991, 14).

Third, historical criticism is a valuable tool in the interpretation of the biblical texts. "Historical criticism seeks to answer a basic question: to what historical circumstances does this text refer, and out of what historical circumstances did it emerge?" (Burnett 2005, 290). Any knowledge that may be acquired to answer such questions is likely to be helpful in understanding the meaning of statements found in that text. "Use of the critical tools simply declares that one desires to read and understand the biblical text in terms of its original intent and context" (Guelich 1982, 23). Such knowledge enables readers of Scripture to bridge with greater accuracy the hermeneutical gap of location, time, and culture that separates them from the writer and original hearers or readers of the text. Bridging that gap is crucial not only for understanding the text in its original context but also for making proper applications of biblical teaching to one's contemporary situation (Blomberg and Markley 2010, 63-64).

Fourth, historical criticism, done properly, can be and has been extremely valuable in Christian apologetics. The defence of the Christian faith is largely a defence of the historical claims of the Bible, pre-eminently its claims concerning the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The historical argument for the resurrection of Christ, a staple of modern Christian apologetics (Craig 1989), utilizes the tools of historical criticism to establish that fact as the explanation that

best accounts for the historical evidence (recently exemplified by Licona 2010). The widespread use of historical criticism to undermine the reliability and trustworthiness of the biblical writings cannot be effectively combatted by decrying critical historical inquiry. Just as "good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered" (C. S. Lewis 1980, 50), so good historical criticism of the Bible is needed if for no other reason than to answer destructive biblical criticism. As I. Howard Marshall pointed out, anyone seeking to "understand the New Testament or defend its historicity against skeptics by any kind of reasonable argument is already practicing the historical method" (Marshall 1977, 131).

Finally, historical criticism is of vital importance in addressing the claims of extracanonical texts heralded from various quarters as alternative or additional scriptures. This point is of obvious direct relevance to the evangelical study of the Book of Mormon, but its relevance is by no means limited to the Book of Mormon or to the LDS scriptures. Publication of historically dubious scriptures has occurred throughout church history, from the apocryphal writings of the early Gnostics to such modern fictions as the Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ. Historical criticism is an invaluable means for exposing the real origins of such texts. In fact, biblical scholars have made the most significant contributions to demonstrating that such "modern apocrypha" are inauthentic (notably Goodspeed 1956; Beskow 1983). Yet proponents of these alternative scriptures may rightly protest the intellectual double standard of applying rigorous historical methods of inquiry to their texts while exempting the biblical writings from the same scrutiny. Rather than eschew all use of historical criticism, evangelicals do better to show that apocryphal scriptures fail the reasonable tests that the biblical writings pass.

3.3.3 Historical Reasoning: Inference to the Best Explanation

The sound practice of historical criticism depends on using sound forms of reasoning about disputed historical questions. Although historians do use both deductive and inductive reasoning, most conclusions in historical inquiry are reached by a process of inference from various types of factual considerations, called *evidence*—a process that is neither purely deductive nor purely deductive nor simply a combination of the two. This evidence-based reasoning may broadly speaking be

called hypothetical reasoning, in which a hypothesis, or proposed account of what took place, is shown to have reasonable support from the evidence available.

According to Mark Day and Gregory Radick, there are "two models of evidential reasoning invoked most frequently by philosophers of historiography, the Bayesian and the explanationist models" (Day and Radick 2009, 87). *Bayesianism* holds that the degree to which a piece of evidence supports a hypothesis depends on the "initial plausibility" of the hypothesis and the degree to which the hypothesis makes that evidence more likely than it would be otherwise (89). The Bayesian model attempts to quantify the probability of hypotheses, making it especially useful when "the evidence is explicitly probabilistic" (90). In most historical questions, however, significant evidence must be taken into account that cannot be quantified. The more generally applicable model of historical reasoning is *explanationism*, which holds that the degree to which the evidence supports a hypothesis depends on how well the hypothesis explains the evidence (91).

What Day and Radick called explanationism is more commonly known as *inference to the best explanation*. Of course, "In one sense the *best* explanation is the true one" (Josephson and Josephson 1994, 15), but by "best" here is meant the explanation that does the best job of accounting for all of the available evidence. Inference to the best explanation is a form of reasoning predicated on the recognition that historians and others engage in reasoned inquiry precisely because they do not have immediate and irrefragable knowledge of the true explanation.

Another term sometimes used for this form of argument is abductive reasoning, or more simply *abduction*. However, the term abduction also can refer to the creative, "outside the box" thinking process by which one generates a plausible explanation for the known facts where no explanation presents itself or where the usual explanation appears unsatisfactory (cf. Magnani 2001, 19). Thus Douglas Walton described an abductive inference as "an intelligent guess" (Walton 2004, 3). As usually understood, though, inference to the best explanation is a form of reasoning for assessing explanations that present themselves to the researcher as part of the evidence to be considered as well as explanations creatively posited by the researcher. For that reason, in this study the term abduction will not be used to mean inference to the best explanation.

Historical reasoning is comparable to reasoning used in various types of inquiries in which conclusions must be reached based on whatever empirical evidence happens to be available. Perhaps the most familiar setting in which inference to the best explanation is used is that of criminal investigation and legal proceedings. So for example one classic collection of essays on history and evidence compared historians to detectives (Winks 1969). Behan McCullagh compared historians and lawyers in the way they formulate arguments for their conclusions. Both seek to show that their description of the past is supported by the evidence. More specifically, the historian is like a prosecuting attorney who must show not merely that his description is a plausible explanation or even the most plausible explanation, but that it is supported by positive evidence. Positive evidence is evidence that actually implies one's hypothesis, as contrasted to circumstantial evidence which is merely consistent with one's hypothesis but does not itself imply that hypothesis (McCullagh 1984, 25). Philosopher of history Peter Kosso also compared historical argumentation to legal reasoning, specifically in a courtroom trial: the jury is presented with conflicting claims that must be adjudicated; the conflicting claims both purport to be an "accurate description of some past event"; the testimonies of witnesses must be weighed along with material evidence (Kosso 2009, 15).

The analogy of historical argumentation to legal reasoning has played a highly significant role in defences of the Bible's historical claims, especially with regard to Christ's resurrection, in modern Christian apologetics. Two classic works in this genre were Thomas Sherlock's *The Tryal of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus* (1729) and Simon Greenleaf's *The Testimony of the Evangelists* (1874), both of which are still being reprinted (Sherlock 2005; Greenleaf 1995). That tradition has continued in the work of legal scholar and Christian apologist John Warwick Montgomery, who popularized a legal-evidences model of apologetics in such works as *Faith Founded on Fact* (1978) and *History, Law and Christianity* (2003 revision of a 1971 book). Montgomery advocated what he called a "juridical" defence of Christianity in which "legal reasoning and the law of evidence" are applied to contested historical claims of the Christian faith (Montgomery 1991, 320). If evangelicals apply such methods of reasoning to the Book of Mormon to test its

historical credibility, they are doing in essence the same thing that Montgomery and other apologists proposed to test the historical reliability of the Gospels.

Inference to the best explanation, whether used in historical scholarship, legal argument, or apologetics, does not mean choosing whichever explanation subjectively feels "best" to the person doing the study. McCullagh identified several conditions that must be met for one to be "rationally justified in believing a statement to be true" via the method of inference to the best explanation. The overarching condition is that the explanation or hypothesis must imply the observable data; however, since more than one hypothesis may meet this basic standard, there are more exacting standards for assessing which hypothesis *best* explains the observable data (McCullagh 1984, 19). The best hypothesis is the one that (1) is the most plausible, (2) is disconfirmed by the fewest accepted beliefs, (3) has the greatest explanatory scope, (4) has the greatest explanatory power, and (5) is the least *ad hoc* (McCullagh 1984, 19; McCullagh 2004, 52). One is rationally justified in accepting as true a hypothesis that exceeds other hypotheses in these five ways so much that it is unlikely that a rival hypothesis will ever prove superior (McCullagh 1984, 19, 28). McCullagh suggested that the commonly cited criterion of simplicity is included in the criteria of being less *ad hoc* (20). In what follows, each of these five criteria will be described in some detail with specific examples.

Most plausibility. According to McCullagh, the most plausible hypothesis is one that is "implied to some degree by a greater variety of accepted truths than any other," is "implied more strongly than any other," and is undermined by fewer beliefs (McCullagh 1984, 19). So stated, plausibility would seem to be a function of three other criteria (explanatory scope, explanatory power, and lack of disconfirmation; see below). However, one of McCullagh's illustrations suggests that plausibility pertains to the degree to which a hypothesis coheres with general beliefs that one holds prior to and independent of the issue that the hypothesis addresses. He discussed the hypothesis that the death of William II in 1100 was caused by witchcraft and comments that the plausibility of this hypothesis "depends upon one's views of the occult" (23). The extent to which a hypothesis is deemed plausible, then, may depend on the worldview of the person assessing the hypothesis.

Least disconfirmation. The best hypothesis is the one that is disconfirmed—contradicted or undermined—by the fewest observational data or by any

observational data in the weakest way. To state the matter in epistemological terms, the best hypothesis is the one for which there are the fewest or weakest *defeaters* (cf. Plantinga 2000, 357-73). In McCullagh's example, the hypothesis that Walter Tirel accidentally shot William II with an arrow meant for a stag is disconfirmed by reliable reports that Tirel denied having shot the king. The same observation may be a defeater for one hypothesis but not for another. For example, Tirel's denial is not nearly as potent a disconfirmation of the hypothesis that Tirel shot the king deliberately on behalf of William's younger brother Henry (McCullagh 1984, 21-24).

Greatest explanatory scope. The explanatory scope of a hypothesis refers to the variety of different kinds of observational data that the hypothesis implies (McCullagh 1984, 19). The issue here is not only "the *quantity* of facts accounted for by a hypothesis" (as stated by Licona 2010, 109, emphasis added) but also the *variety* of the facts explained. Thus, a hypothesis that accounts for both physical evidence (such as archaeological data) and human testimonial evidence (such as textual data) is superior in explanatory scope to a hypothesis that accounts only for one or the other kind of data. For example, the hypothesis that all of the bullets that struck John F. Kennedy and John Connally in Dallas on November 22, 1963, came from the rifle found on the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository explains a wide variety of facts. For example, most of the eyewitnesses reported hearing three shots; most of them thought they came from the direction of the Depository; witnesses saw a man shooting from a sixth-story window of the Depository; three shell casings were found on the floor by the rifle; and ballistics testing matched bullet fragments in the presidential car and a bullet found on Connally's gurney at the hospital to the same rifle. The combination of human testimonies (to both sight and sound) and physical evidence (the gun, shell casings, bullet and bullet fragments) gives the conventional hypothesis great explanatory scope.

Greatest explanatory power. The explanatory power of a hypothesis refers to the degree to which the hypothesis makes the observational data probable (McCullagh 1984, 19). For example, the hypothesis that Jesus actually died by crucifixion makes more probable the reports of Jesus' death and burial than does the hypothesis that Jesus only lost consciousness on the cross. Both hypotheses account for the same observations, but the hypothesis that Jesus died makes those

observations more probable than does the hypothesis that Jesus temporarily lost consciousness.

Least ad hoc. A hypothesis is said to be *ad hoc* if it requires additional suppositions or assumptions, the only merit of which appears to be that they are necessary to make the hypothesis fit the observational data (for a useful discussion see Dauer 1989, 282-86). In other words, a hypothesis is *ad hoc* if it requires extraneous or gratuitous assumptions, for which there is no distinct observational evidence, to counter disconfirmation or defeaters of the hypothesis. For example, in order to buttress the hypothesis that Paul's experience of seeing the risen Jesus was a hallucination, some sceptics have speculated that Paul had a Gentile childhood friend, or that he was unconsciously attracted to the Christian faith. Since no evidence for these claims exist, Licona rightly characterized them as *ad hoc* (Licona 2010, 507, 511, 518).

At least one LDS scholar, William Hamblin, has proposed using reasoning along the lines of inference to the best explanation in investigating the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Hamblin suggested that the proper procedure is to examine the text on the two hypotheses of its being ancient and modern, compare the "relative explanatory power" of each view, and attempt to determine "which model is the most plausible explanation for the existence of the text" (Hamblin 1994, 503).

The result of the application of McCullagh's five criteria to competing historical hypotheses or claims is a conclusion as to their relative success in accounting for all of the known evidence. "While perfect certainty is never achievable, there are gradations of plausibility—some kinds of evidence are better than others, some kinds of interpretations are easier to support" (Howell and Prevenier 2001, 79). Estimations of the success of a particular hypothesis may range from clear proof to clear disproof, from proof beyond reasonable doubt to refutation beyond reasonable defence. Understanding historical conclusions as expressing "gradations of plausibility" is common in historical scholarship. McCullagh ranged historical hypotheses along a continuum or spectrum ranging from "extremely improbable" to "extremely probable" (McCullagh 1984, 52). As Licona has documented, numerous biblical scholars such as N. T. Wright, John Meier, James D. G. Dunn, and Luke Timothy Johnson have expressed a similar understanding that historical conclusions have varying strengths of probability or plausibility (Licona 2010, 120-22).

A useful scale for expressing conclusions about the authenticity of documents comes from ASTM International based on a report for use by forensic document examiners from the American Academy of Forensic Science (ASTM 2008). The scale runs from definitely authentic to definitely not authentic as follows:

1. Identification (definite conclusion of identity)
2. Strong probability (highly probable, very probable)
3. Probable
4. Indications (evidence to suggest)
5. No conclusion (totally inconclusive, indeterminable)
6. Indications did not
7. Probably did not
8. Strong probability did not
9. Elimination

The limitations of historical inquiry should not be minimized, but neither should they be exaggerated. Although some historical problems are beyond solution due to meagre or conflicting evidence, wholesale scepticism about the possibility of reaching definite or confident answers historical questions is unwarranted. "The fact that some historical descriptions are disputed does not mean that none can be proved true beyond reasonable doubt. In fact thousands can" (McCullagh 1998, 22).

3.4 Historical Authenticity and Critical Methodology

The purpose of this study is to assess the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon with a specific focus on the authenticity of a speech that it attributes to Jesus in which he repeats nearly but not quite verbatim the Sermon on the Mount as it appears in the KJV of the Gospel of Matthew. In an interesting comment, LDS scholar Noel Reynolds suggested that critics of the Book of Mormon typically fail to consider "any of the standard techniques for detecting forgeries of ancient books" (Reynolds ed. 1997, 99). Considering such techniques or methods seems an eminently reasonable approach to the subject of whether the Book of Mormon is authentic or something more like a forgery.

3.4.1 Pseudepigrapha

A useful place to begin is an article published in *Ensign*, the LDS Church's official magazine, by two BYU scholars on the significance of ancient Jewish and Christian literature discovered in modern times (Brown and Griggs 1974). They pointed out that "the term pseudepigrapha means pseudonymous writings, or

writings authored anonymously and falsely attributed to another author, usually a famous person from Israel's ancient past" (70). By this definition, of course, the Book of Mormon does not qualify as pseudepigrapha, since its supposed authors are completely unknown outside its pages. Yet the principle that a highly religious or spiritual book may purport to be something it is not and may claim to be written by someone other than its true author—by someone from the distant past—may be quite relevant. If good reasons can be given for denying, for example, that the Genesis figure of Enoch actually wrote the pseudepigraphal work known as 1 Enoch, it may likewise be possible to deny that Mormon and the other supposed Nephite prophets wrote the Book of Mormon.

In an excellent study that explained the way scholars go about dating such writings, James H. Charlesworth provided an overview of the literature commonly called the Old Testament pseudepigrapha (Charlesworth 1985). These writings date "from *basically* 200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E." (27), though Charlesworth emphasized that the texts are often composites of materials difficult to date with any precision (31). Some of this literature definitely originates after the New Testament, such as 3 Enoch, various texts attributed to Ezra, and a number of "testaments" including the Testament of Solomon (32). However, others clearly originated before the New Testament era, as suggested by numerous quotations in the early church fathers and demonstrated in such manuscript discoveries as the Dead Sea Scrolls (36-37). For example, the book of Jubilees, fragments of which were found at Qumran, "is clearly Jewish, pre-Christian, and free from Christian interpolations and redactions"; several of the New Testament writings "contain phrases and concepts that are also found in Jubilees," suggesting that their authors were likely familiar with the book or with the traditions it records (41). Charlesworth drew no firm line limiting just how much earlier than the New Testament these pseudepigraphal writings were, suggesting that some of them may date from as early as the third century BC. There is no realistic possibility that Shem, Enoch, Job, Joseph, or Moses wrote any part of the pseudepigraphal texts written in their names.

It will be useful to consider a specific example of a pseudepigraphal book to illustrate the principles involved in determining the origins of such a work. The *Testament of Solomon* has been dated anywhere from the first century AD to the Middle Ages (ca. 1200), though for the past century most scholarship has favoured a

date in the first millennium. James Harding and Loveday Alexander explained the method by which the work should be dated. The first order of business is to date the extant manuscripts, examine their contents, and determine just what one is trying to date. All of the possible manuscripts for the Testament of Solomon are Greek manuscripts from the fifteenth century or later, with the exception of four fragmentary papyri from the fifth or sixth century containing material corresponding to Testament of Solomon 18—a chapter which Harding and Alexander observed stands apart in its content from the rest of the work. The manuscripts, in fact, are so different in their contents that it is doubtful they represent "a single identifiable literary text" (Harding and Alexander 1999). One must then consider external attestation or *testimonia* to the existence of the work in question. Scholars have found references to a Testament of Solomon as early as the fifth century, but these references cannot confirm that its contents matched those of the medieval work or works.

According to Harding and Alexander, "The next stage in the process of dating the Testament involves a consideration of the traditions which it embodies and their date" in order to discover if possible the historical context in which its ideas originated (Harding and Alexander 1999). Allusions to the New Testament and similarities to varied Solomonic traditions in Josephus, the Nag Hammadi texts, Greek magical papyri, some Cairo Geniza texts, the Talmud, and the Qur'an are all suggestive, though some are more informative than others as to the likely context of the Testament of Solomon. Harding and Alexander concluded that a date in the sixth century seems most likely yet is far from certain.

Note that the tentativeness of Harding and Alexander's conclusion does not open the door to any hypothesis of the work's origins. One might plausibly argue for a somewhat earlier date, such as the fourth century, but the Testament of Solomon cannot plausibly be dated before Christ, and no scholar thinks it could possibly originate even close to the time of Solomon himself. The convergence of all of the evidence—the original work or works being written in Greek, the dates of the extant manuscripts, the allusions to the first-century New Testament writings, its use of traditions about Solomon common in the first six centuries or so—definitely precludes a date prior to the time of Christ. Thus one need not be able to answer every question about a text or be definite about exactly how it originated to be able

to rule out some theories about its origin or to assign the text to a general era or time period.

3.4.2 Modern Apocrypha

More directly relevant to the question of the Book of Mormon's authenticity is the existence of several other books purporting to be translations of ancient writings about Christ but that scholars view as modern frauds—what biblical scholar Edgar Goodspeed called "modern apocrypha" (Goodspeed 1956). Brown and Griggs, the two BYU scholars cited in the previous section, acknowledged the existence of such publications but noted that Goodspeed's studies "demonstrate that these so-called ancient works are really modern forgeries." They mentioned as examples the "Antiquarian Gospel" (by which they probably meant the *Aquarian Gospel*, one of the works critiqued by Goodspeed), the *Confession of Pontius Pilate*, and several other books, including the *Archko Volume*. Brown and Griggs, following Goodspeed, offered two reasons for dismissing the *Archko Volume* as a modern forgery. The first is that "the existence of the original texts has never been demonstrated." The second is that the author "lifted a passage directly out of Lew Wallace's book, *Ben Hur*," which had been published just four years earlier (Brown and Griggs 1974, 73).

The comments by conservative BYU scholars Brown and Griggs in the LDS Church's official magazine endorsing Goodspeed's critique of such modern frauds are noteworthy. They demonstrate that engaging in critical analysis to determine the authenticity of a supposedly ancient scripture is not antithetical to a posture of faith in God, Christ, or revelation. Only by special pleading might one claim that such an approach is valid with the *Archko Volume* but not with the Book of Mormon.

3.4.3 Homer in Mark? Methodological Cautions

In seeking to determine if the Book of Mormon's use of biblical materials reveals it to be unhistorical, evangelicals will need to be careful not to employ a method that would unfairly or fallaciously deny as historical not only the Book of Mormon but also historical narrative texts in the Bible, such as the Gospels. For example, evangelicals should avoid using a method similar to that of Jesus Seminar fellow Dennis MacDonald, who argued that the Gospel of Mark was a "novel" based primarily on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as its "hypotexts" (MacDonald 2000) and

that Acts was also largely a work of fiction that draws several of its stories from Homer (MacDonald 2003). Even some academics not inclined to a conservative view of the Gospels have been sceptical of MacDonald's method and arguments (e.g., Mitchell 2003; Sandnes 2005).

Not surprisingly, at least one LDS apologist has compared theories about the Book of Mormon's origins based on parallels with earlier literature to MacDonald's highly questionable theory (e.g., McGuire 2007). At the other end of the spectrum, sceptic Robert M. Price, drawing in part on MacDonald and in part on the theory that the Gospels are midrashic fictions created out of Old Testament narratives, argued that "we must view the gospels and Acts as analogous with the Book of Mormon, an inspiring pastiche of stories derived creatively from previous scriptures by a means of literary extrapolation" (Price 2004). The same sorts of concerns are applicable to similar studies of the NT writings, such as Marianne Palmer Bonz's thesis that Luke-Acts is based on Vergil's *Aeneid* (Bonz 2000) or Michael J. Reimer's claim that the "hypotext" of Mark 1:1-4:34 was the Pentateuch (Reimer 2006).

Paul Eddy and Gregory Boyd (2007) laid out ten objections to MacDonald's hypothesis worth considering with regard to the development of a sound methodology for assessing the use of the Sermon on the Mount (SM) in the Book of Mormon's "Sermon at the Temple" (ST). (All parenthetical citations in the following ten points are to Eddy and Boyd.)

1. According to MacDonald, both similarities (in the form of allusions or parallels) and differences (specifically, contrasts) between Homer and Mark support the conclusion that Mark is based on Homer. This makes MacDonald's view "virtually unfalsifiable" (Eddy and Boyd 2007, 340). The problem is not in claiming that some similarities and differences are relevant, but in explaining the differences in such a way that *any* difference whatsoever somehow is counted as evidence for literary dependence. This sort of methodological mistake must be avoided in considering the significance of differences between the SM and the ST.

2. "Many of MacDonald's suggested parallels seem quite forced" (340). Since no Mormon would deny some relationship between the SM and the ST, specific parallels between the two texts cannot be dismissed as forced. However, in seeking to elucidate the backgrounds to the two texts there may be occasion

to cite parallels with *other* texts, and here the issue of whether such parallels are genuine or forced must be addressed.

3. In his zeal to make a case for Mark's dependence on Homer, MacDonald tended to slight the more obvious influences from OT texts (341). Since the Nephites, if they existed, had access to much of the OT, some allowance must be made for the possibility of Jesus quoting from or alluding to the OT in any speech he might have made to them.

4. MacDonald wrongly argued that the more often a Homeric story or motif showed up in ancient literature, the more likely a similar story in Mark was dependent on Homer. But if such stories were commonplace it would seem that no one, including Mark, need have associated them with Homer (341). Similarly, commonplace notions or words that happen to be in the Book of Mormon and in some part of the Bible need not be evidence of a literary relationship.

5. Similarities between two texts do not of themselves prove literary relationship, a fallacy Samuel Sandmel famously called *parallelomania* (341). Again, any argument for a literary relationship between the ST and some other text must be made on the basis of more than mere similarities.

6. Even if Mark did imitate Homer, it does not follow that Mark was writing fiction; he may have seen certain parallels in Jesus' life with Homeric stories "and allowed the parallels to shape the telling of the Jesus story" (342). This caution is inapplicable to the supposed original Book of Mormon, since its author allegedly would not have had any knowledge of the Gospel of Matthew. However, might the relationship between the SM and the ST be explained in a similar manner as the result of Joseph Smith's shaping his "translation" of the Book of Mormon? This question needs to be considered when assessing the significance of similarities between the two sermons.

7. MacDonald "admits that there may be historical elements in Mark" but offered no way of distinguishing those historical elements from the supposed Homeric fictional elements in Mark (342). This criticism of MacDonald's method would be relevant to the Book of Mormon only if there were some evidence of historical elements in its narrative.

8. "MacDonald has not adequately explained *why* Mark would want to create a theological fiction patterned after Homer" (342). Eddy and Boyd's observation is relevant to this study in that part of any complete theory of a modern origin of the Book of Mormon needs to include some explanation of its purpose.

9. No one until recently understood Mark as fiction, let alone fiction patterned after Homer. "One wonders how everyone got it wrong for so long" (342), especially since MacDonald's theory assumes that Mark's readers would have picked up on the Homeric parallels (343). This kind of concern, frankly, is not relevant to this study, since critics of the Book of Mormon have always viewed the ST as basically cribbed from the SM in Matthew.

10. "MacDonald's theory requires that we accept that Mark was a rather savvy, sophisticated literary critic who lived in the world of irony and textual finesse," a view of Mark that fits the contemporary postmodern cultural milieu better than it does Mark's own ancient Christian community (343). This criticism of MacDonald's theory is instructive for the present study as a warning against developing a theory of the Book of Mormon's origin that would require Joseph Smith, whose formal schooling was minimal, to have been a sophisticated scholar or literary genius.

In review, most of Eddy and Boyd's criticisms of MacDonald's method are suggestive of legitimate cautions to be observed in comparing the ST to the SM. The point is not that such comparisons are irrelevant to establishing a literary relationship but that the argument for such a relationship must avoid various methodological fallacies.

3.5 Conclusion

An evangelical critical methodology is both needed and possible for the study of the Book of Mormon. Such a methodology is needed in order to present a reasoned, cogent explanation for why evangelicals accept the books of the Bible as authentic but not the Book of Mormon. Although a purely theological critique of the Book of Mormon has a legitimate place, an evangelical critical methodology for evaluating the claims of the Book of Mormon is one that is faithful to evangelical theological positions without judging the Book of Mormon simply on the basis of its deviations from those positions.

The methodology proposed here is essentially an historical one. It assumes a critical-realist approach to historical knowledge that is cautiously optimistic about the possibility of such knowledge. The assessment of the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon is an exercise in historical criticism, which is not to be confused with the *naturalistic* historical-critical method that is closed to divine or supernatural activity in history. Legitimate historical criticism is consistent with biblical teaching and makes constructive contributions to the understanding and rational defence of the Bible—and is also useful in detecting and exposing fraudulent scriptures.

The form of reasoning that dominates historical criticism is inference to the best explanation, familiar in legal reasoning and historical apologetics. The best explanation is one that is the most plausible, disconfirmed by the fewest accepted beliefs, has the greatest explanatory scope and power, and is the least *ad hoc*. Though historical study does not produce absolute or mathematical certainty, it can reach conclusions as to what happened in the past with varying degrees of confidence.

As even Mormon scholars have on occasion acknowledged, historical criticism provides a genuine service by placing various controversial writings in their proper historical contexts. These include both ancient pseudepigraphal texts and modern apocryphal texts that falsely purport to be ancient testimonies and scriptures. As long as certain methodological cautions must be observed when assessing the origins and sources of a particular text, historical criticism is a valuable and necessary discipline in the study of such controversial texts as the Book of Mormon.

4 INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

4.1 Critical Issues in Matthew and the Sermon at the Temple

The question of the authenticity of the Sermon at the Temple (ST) in the Book of Mormon cannot be answered in a historically critical way apart from some understanding of comparative issues regarding the Sermon on the Mount (SM) in the Gospel of Matthew. The two texts are so similar verbally that everyone agrees there must be a direct relationship between them. The traditional Mormon explanation is that the two texts represent two similar sermons that Jesus delivered to two different audiences (Jews in Galilee and Nephites in the Americas). The standard non-Mormon explanation is that the ST was composed essentially by copying the SM from the Gospel of Matthew though with various minor changes. A mediating view favoured by a few LDS scholars hypothesizes that Jesus preached a sermon to the Nephites that was somewhat like the SM, and that Joseph Smith used the SM as a serviceable representation of what Jesus said in his sermon to the Nephites. In order to assess the merits of these three views of the ST, it is necessary to address various critical issues pertaining to the SM and to the Gospel of Matthew in which the SM appears.

For example, any fine-grained comparisons of the wording of the ST to the SM are bound up with the questions of whether the extant Greek text of Matthew is verbally reliable and of whether Greek was the original language of the Gospel. Some LDS scholars, usually in the interests of defending the Book of Mormon, have answered one or both questions in the negative. These questions are therefore addressed in this chapter as preparation for the detailed study of the ST in chapter 7. In defence of the close relationship of the ST to the SM, LDS scholars also generally dispute the conventional view among NT scholars that the SM is an arrangement of sayings of Jesus originally delivered on various occasions. It is therefore necessary to address the issues of the structure and sources of the Gospel of Matthew as well as the structure and origins of the SM (addressed in chapter 5 of this study).

This chapter and the next three, then, examine select introductory critical and exegetical issues pertaining to the two primary texts to be compared in this dissertation: the Sermon on the Mount (SM) in Matthew (chaps. 4-5 of this study) and the Sermon at the Temple (ST) in the Book of Mormon (chaps. 6-7). The two pairs of chapters are structured in similar ways and generally treat the same types of issues for both texts.

This chapter presents a detailed introduction to the Gospel of Matthew dealing with such issues as the manuscript evidence, original language, ancient context, genre, sources, authorship, and date. (For the sake of convenience and following standard practice, the name Matthew is used for the author without presupposing that the apostle by that name was the book's actual author.) The material in this chapter is relevant to the study in two ways: it establishes the authenticity and historicity of Matthew as a base of comparison for assessing the authenticity and historicity of the Book of Mormon, and it answers specific issues of relevance in making comparisons of the ST to the SM.

Following this chapter's introduction to the book as a whole, chapter 5 is an examination of the SM dealing with such issues as text-critical questions about specific texts, its sources and structure, the composition of the SM, and an important interpretation of the SM as a "temple text" by LDS scholar John Welch by which he has sought to defend the authenticity of the ST. Each of the issues addressed in chapter 5 is important for making detailed comparisons of the ST to the SM. Chapters 6 and 7 proceed in the same fashion, giving an introduction to the Book of Mormon (chap. 6) followed by an examination of the ST (chap. 7), all with specific comparisons to the findings in chapters 4 and 5 concerning Matthew and the SM. Chapter 8 concludes the study by applying the findings of chapters 6 and 7 to the issues of the historical credibility of the Book of Mormon as a whole and of the ST in particular.

In all of these chapters, the two texts are approached from the evangelical critical methodological stance set forth in chapter 3. The analysis generally assumes as given shared beliefs of evangelicals and Mormons as to the existence of God and angels, the factual, historical truth and paramount importance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the possibility of divine revelation. The study in this chapter also makes note of shared views of evangelicals and Mormons regarding

introductory critical issues pertaining to Matthew. The texts are approached with cautious optimism as to the possibility of acquiring genuine though not exhaustive or perfect knowledge about the past through an examination of all of the available evidence. The primary question of the study, the authenticity of the ST as a report of a speech given by Jesus to the Nephites, comes into focus as the ST is examined in chapter 7 in light of the background findings in chapters 4-6.

4.2 Texts and Versions

A natural place to begin an introduction to the Gospel of Matthew is to consider what manuscripts of Matthew are extant, when the earliest extant manuscripts were produced, and the reliability of the contemporary text of the Gospel. Examining these questions in detail is of relevance to the present study in two ways. (1) Such information about the history of the existing text of Matthew may be usefully compared with information about the history of the text of the Book of Mormon. (2) Determining the extent to which contemporary published editions of the text of Matthew may be regarded as corresponding to the original text is important for assessing the significance of both similarities and differences in the wording of the SM and the ST. The question is made unavoidable, given the fact that LDS scholars often contend that the texts of the Bible have been irremediably corrupted over time.

4.2.1   Greek Manuscripts

Especially important are manuscripts in Greek, recognized as the original language of the Gospel (see below, §4.3). Biblical scholars classify New Testament manuscripts into four categories. (1) *Papyri* are manuscripts written on papyrus, treated as a separate category because such manuscripts are generally (not always) early and are comparatively rare. (2) *Uncials* are manuscripts mostly written on parchment and that use the older block, all-capitals script; because it uses all "large" letters, these manuscripts are also called *majuscules*. (3) *Minuscules* are manuscripts written on parchment or paper in a running cursive script with lower-case letters. (4) *Lectionaries* are manuscripts of liturgical readings from the Bible.

Lists of the extant manuscripts of the New Testament (NT) are available in numerous places, including various critical editions of the Greek NT (e.g.,

NET/NTG). An authoritative list of all Greek New Testament manuscripts is maintained and frequently updated online by Das Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF, The Institute for New Testament Textual Research) at the University of Münster (http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/). Its list provides data concerning the present location, date of production, the writing material used, physical dimensions, number of leaves, and text contained that has survived in each manuscript.

The exact number of extant Greek NT manuscripts at any given time is difficult to confirm definitively for a number of reasons. On the positive side, new manuscript discoveries continue to be made, and it can take months or years for a manuscript to pass through the academic process of study and classification. On the negative side, some documents catalogued as separate items have been shown to come from the same manuscript, some catalogued manuscripts have since become misplaced, lost, or destroyed, and a few manuscripts have been reclassified (e.g., as a lectionary instead of an uncial). The numbers given here, then, are simply the best available statistics at the time of writing.

The INTF database as of July 2014 shows a total of 5,638 extant Greek manuscripts of NT texts, varying in length from small portions of individual books to complete collections of all 27 books of the NT. These manuscripts include 126 papyri from the second through the eighth centuries, 286 uncials from the second through the eleventh centuries, 2,841 minuscules from the ninth through the eighteenth centuries, and 2,384 lectionary manuscripts from the fourth through the sixteenth centuries. Because "the average Greek New Testament manuscript is well over 400 pages long," this means that "there are more than 2.5 million pages of text" in the extant Greek manuscripts of the NT (Ehrman and Wallace 2011, 33). It should be noted that about five thousand of the extant manuscripts date from the eleventh century or later. This still leaves about six hundred NT manuscripts extant from the first millennium.

The Gospel of Matthew traditionally occupies a position of prominence in the Bible, appearing as the first of the four Gospels in lists and bound editions beginning as early as the end of the second century, in almost all Greek manuscripts containing the four Gospels, and in almost all editions of the New Testament beginning in the fourth century (see Metzger 1988, 296-97; Hengel 2004, 17-18).

Because of its historically privileged place in the canon, Matthew is one of the best attested writings in the NT.

Table 3. Complete Greek Manuscripts of Matthew, 4th-10th Centuries						
4th C.	5th C.	6th C.	7th C.	8th C.	9th C.	10th C.
א; D; W	C	Σ	0211	E	*Uncials*: K; Δ; 017; 021; 030; Ω *Minuscules*: 33; 461; 566; 892; 1143	*Uncials*: 028 *Minuscules*: 24; 27; 34; 63; 67; 100; 106; 151; 161; 262; 274; 299; 338; 344; 364; 371; 399; 411; 420; 478; 481; 1582; plus about 40 more

For the Gospel of Matthew alone, there are currently catalogued 25 papyri, 83 uncials, and 1,706 minuscules, for a total of 1,814 manuscripts excluding lectionaries. (See the list of 1,812 manuscripts of Matthew in Aland, Aland, and Wachtel 1999, 1:2-4, to which must now be added uncials 0307 and 0321.) No specific number of catalogued lectionary manuscripts with text from Matthew is available, but since most extant lectionary manuscripts consist primarily of readings from the Gospels the number for Matthew must conservatively be in the hundreds and may be closer to a thousand. There are extant manuscripts of Matthew from every century since the second century and complete manuscript copies of the whole Gospel of Matthew extant from every century since the fourth (see Table 3).

Currently, the earliest extant Greek manuscripts for Matthew are five papyrus fragments most likely dating from the second century. (Except where otherwise noted, dates given for New Testament manuscripts should be regarded as accurate to within about half a century.) Two of these, traditionally catalogued as P[64] and P[67], are from the same manuscript known as the Magdalen Papyrus. Although Carsten Peter Thiede argued that this papyrus should be dated to the late first century (Thiede 1995; Thiede and d'Ancona 1996), most scholars in the field have rejected his arguments and maintain a date at the end of the second century (e.g., Head 1995; Parker 1995; Stanton 1995; Wachtel 1995; Elliott 1996). The other three early

manuscripts of Matthew are papyri fragments discovered literally in the trash at an archaeological site in Egypt known as Oxyrhynchus. Two of these fragments, P[77] and P[103], are probably from the same manuscript, with the last of the three to be catalogued being P[104]. These five papyri fragments from the second century contain about forty verses of Matthew from seven different chapters. There are also eight papyri fragments of Matthew dated to the third century and a dozen more from the fourth through the seventh centuries.

The earliest complete copies of Matthew in Greek are parts of the Sinaiticus (325-360) and Vaticanus (325-350) codices (books), two of the most important ancient copies of the New Testament. The fifth-century Washingtonianus also contains a complete copy of Matthew, and there is one complete copy from each of the next three centuries. A wealth of manuscripts are extant from the ninth century, including six complete uncials of Matthew and five more uncials that are mostly complete. The earliest minuscule manuscripts are also extant from the ninth century, including five complete and three nearly complete copies of Matthew. The uncials or majuscules began phasing out of production in the tenth century, a period from which there are over sixty complete minuscule manuscripts of Matthew extant.

All told, there are nearly a hundred complete or near-complete manuscripts of Matthew dating from the second through the tenth centuries (23 uncials and about 75 minuscules), and hundreds more complete or near-complete manuscripts of Matthew dating from the eleventh century and later. There are also 88 more manuscripts of varying sizes containing parts of the Gospel (25 papyri and 63 uncials).

The manuscript attestation for Matthew, like that for the rest of the NT, is far superior to that of any other ancient work of literature. Welch's comment is correct though understated: "The New Testament is one of the best documented books to come down to us from the classical world" (Welch 1999, 199). Bart Ehrman, an agnostic who is currently the world's most famous and influential New Testament textual critic, fully acknowledges the point: "We have more manuscripts for the New Testament than for any other book from the ancient world—many, many more manuscripts than we have for the writings of Homer, Plato, Cicero, or any other important author" (Ehrman 2012, 20). Homer's *Iliad* is by far the best attested ancient writing outside the New Testament, but even the Iliad has only about 2,200

total extant manuscripts (Wallace 2011, 30 n. 27). The earliest manuscripts for the *Iliad* are papyri fragments from the third century BC (Dué 2010), some five centuries after its composition—and the earliest manuscripts that are close to complete date from the tenth century AD, nearly two millennia after it was written (West 2001, 139-40). Daniel Wallace points out that whereas there are 124 manuscripts for the New Testament writings within three centuries of their composition, for most classical literature there are "*no literary remains*" at all within three centuries and in most cases less than a dozen manuscripts total (Wallace 2011, 29).

The many extant Greek manuscripts of Matthew, like those for the rest of the books of the Bible, were discovered at various times and in a variety of physical settings—what archaeologists call their *provenances*. The trash site at Oxyrhynchus, already mentioned, is the source of many of the papyri fragments of Matthew that are extant. So far, all of the papyri that have become extant were discovered in Egypt. However, the differences in the types of NT text these papyri exhibit and the fact that people went in and out of Egypt from and to all parts of the ancient Greco-Roman world are good reasons to regard the papyri as representative of the NT text throughout the ancient church, not just in Egypt (Epp 1989, 90; Royse 2008, 15-17). These and other documents were first discovered there at the end of the nineteenth century, and scholars are still deciphering the finds and publishing the texts of these important manuscripts. Other manuscripts sat in monasteries for many centuries before they were catalogued by modern scholars. In some cases the provenances of manuscripts is certain, in some cases uncertain, and in other cases completely unknown. Today manuscripts of Matthew (and other parts of the NT) can be viewed in museums and libraries all over the world in such cities as London, Oxford, Ann Arbor, New York, Princeton, Washington, Boston, Barcelona, Basel, Berlin, Cairo, Dublin, Florence, Jerusalem, Leningrad, Oslo, Rome, Paris, and Saint Petersburg (for a table of the largest collections, see Aland and Aland 1989, 79).

As is explained and documented in chapter 6, this wealth of extant, publicly accessible manuscript support for the ancient Greek text of Matthew (and of the rest of the NT) stands in stark contrast to the lack of *any* such ancient-language text for the Book of Mormon.

4.2.2   Ancient Versions and Patristic Citations

Of secondary significance for fine-grained textual study of the NT are its many *versions* or translations in languages other than Greek. Christians began translating NT books into other languages, specifically Coptic, Syriac, and Latin, in the second century, and manuscripts of these versions are extant from as early as the third and fourth centuries.

The earliest substantial copy of Matthew in a language other than Greek is the Schøyen Codex (MS 2650), written in the Middle Egyptian or Mesokemic dialect of Coptic in the first half of the fourth century. The manuscript is missing 1:1-5:37 but has essentially the rest of the Gospel. It was apparently in a monastery near Oxyrhynchus, discovered by an antiquities dealer around 1830, and became part of the Martin Schøyen Collection in 1999. Hans-Martin Schenke studied the manuscript and theorized that it derived from a different version of the Gospel than canonical Matthew (Schenke 2000). Tjitze Baarda (2004) responded to Schenke by explaining that the differences between the Schøyen Codex and Greek Matthew are due to the flexibility of the Coptic translation. Evans suggested that the Schøyen Codex version of Matthew may have been based on a Jewish-Christian edition of the Greek Gospel of Matthew (Evans 2003). Both Schenke (2000) and Leonard (2014) argued that the Schøyen Codex is the earliest extant witness to most of the Gospel of Matthew, including most of the SM, since they date the codex to the early fourth century and the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus codices to the middle of the fourth century. Given the need for allowing some margin of error in dates assigned to all of these codices, it is perhaps fair to conclude that the Schøyen Codex was produced more or less contemporaneously with the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus codices.

Another early version for which a substantially complete manuscript exists from the fourth century is the Syriac. The discovery of the late fourth-century Syriac Sinaiticus in 1892 by Agnes Smith and her sister Margaret Gibson has been recounted in the popular book *The Sisters of Sinai* (Soskice 2009). It includes much of Matthew including most of the SM (1:1-6:10; 7:3-16:15 [except 12:5, 26-28]; 18:11-20:24; 21:20-28:7 [except 25:16, 21-24, 27-31]). Other Syriac manuscripts of the Bible have been found as far away from Syria as Armenia, India, and China (Metzger and Ehrman 2005, 96).

Christians were also translating the NT into Latin by the mid to late second century. In the late fourth century both Jerome—who produced the Latin *Vulgate* ("common" version) of the Bible—and Augustine noted that numerous Latin versions of the NT had been produced by their day, and many non-Vulgate manuscripts are extant and confirm their report. The differences among these Old Latin versions were partly regional, as they were produced in such different locations as North Africa, Spain, Gaul, and Italy (Metzger and Ehrman 2005, 101). Gospel manuscripts of these pre-Vulgate or Old Latin versions are extant from the fourth century and later. Philip Comfort (2005, 92-93) listed one notable Old Latin manuscript from the fourth century, one from about 400 containing Matthew 1-15, and three from the fifth century. The fourth-century manuscript (Codex Vercellensis) is European and the oldest Old Latin manuscript extant, while the manuscript of Matthew 1-15 (Codex Bobbiensis) represents a version of African origin (Metzger and Ehrman 2005, 102). All told the number of extant Latin manuscripts of the NT total about ten thousand (Parker 2008, 57)—the precise number being unknown simply because there are too many to catalogue completely. The Latin manuscript tradition thus represents one of the earliest witnesses, as well the most voluminous witness, to the text of the NT (see also Petzer 1995; McNamara 2004).

Also of significance for textual criticism is the presence of quotations from the NT in the writings of Christians in the early centuries, especially those known as the church fathers. As Metzger and Ehrman pointed out, "so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament" (Metzger and Ehrman, 2005, 126). The Centre d'Analyse et de Documentation Patristique in Paris has published an index of patristic (church fathers') citations from the Bible, entitled *Biblia Patristica*. Even though this index is far from complete (i.e., many church fathers' writings are not included), it runs seven volumes of hundreds of pages each. The first three volumes cover church fathers from the second and third centuries. They include over 170 pages listing at least 14,000 citations from Matthew alone, including over 2,500 citations from the SM (Allenbach et. al. 1977-2001, 1:223-93; 2:235-99; 3:224-81). To put these numbers in some perspective, Matthew has about 1,069 verses, including 107 in the SM. Thus the text of Matthew is witnessed many times over in the patristic writings.

The rich attestation to the Gospel of Matthew from the patristic literature and ancient versions provides another striking contrast to the Book of Mormon. Not only are there no extant manuscripts or copies of any part of the Book of Mormon dating from before the time of Joseph Smith, there is no evidence of anyone ever quoting it, citing it, or in any way referring to it before the 1820s. This point will be developed fully in chapter 6.

4.2.3   Reliability of the Text

The Gospel of Matthew, then, along with the rest of the NT, has an unparalleled "paper trail" of textual witnesses, with hard physical evidence from within about a hundred years of the Gospel's composition. These include papyrus fragments from the second and third centuries; translations into Coptic, Syriac, and Latin originating from the second century and attested by manuscripts from the third century; thousands of quotations from church fathers throughout the second and third centuries; and complete manuscript copies in the original Greek language and in the three earliest versions dating from the fourth and fifth centuries. No other ancient work has attestation even remotely comparable. As Wallace commented, "If we have doubts about what the autographic NT said, those doubts would have to be multiplied a *hundredfold* for the average classical author" (Wallace 2011, 29). Yet many people today, including some NT textual critics, do express doubts about knowing what the original NT writings said.

The importance of this question for the present study is especially significant because Mormons commonly question the integrity of the biblical text—and view the Book of Mormon text as at least far more reliable. Article 8 of the LDS Church's scripture Articles of Faith (part of the collection known as the Pearl of Great Price), written in 1842 by Joseph Smith, affirms: "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God." Elsewhere Joseph stated, "I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* 2007, 206). The Book of Mormon itself calls into question the completeness and integrity of the Bible: "Wherefore, thou seest that after the book [i.e., the Bible] hath gone forth through the hands of the great and

abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God" (1 Nephi 13:28). On the basis of these statements, Ezra Taft Benson concluded, "Unlike the Bible, which passed through generations of copyists, translators, and corrupt religionists who tampered with the text, the Book of Mormon came from writer to reader in just one inspired step of translation" (Benson 1986, 5).

If the text of the Bible is suspect due to alleged tampering, whereas no such suspicion attaches to the Book of Mormon, this disparity has obvious implications for a comparison of the SM in Matthew and the ST in the Book of Mormon. Although Mormons do not explain all of the differences between the two sermons in this way, in at least some instances they have suggested that the ST presents a more faithful or accurate version of what Jesus would have said in the SM (e.g., Welch 1999, 140-44, 223; see above, §2.9). The accuracy of the text of Matthew, then, is an important consideration for the present study.

The most common and significant arguments against the reliability or accuracy of the NT text as found in contemporary printed editions of the Greek NT appeal to two problems regarding the extant manuscripts on which those editions are based. The first problem is the gap in time between the earliest copies and the original compositions. The second problem is the multitude of variant readings, i.e., the differences among the manuscripts as to the precise wording of the NT writings. Most if not all objections to the reliability of the NT text come down to these two issues.

With regard to the time lag between the original composition of the NT books and the earliest extant copies, that gap has closed significantly since the time of Joseph Smith. When the KJV was published in 1611, its NT was based on printed editions of the Greek NT that derive from the work of Erasmus, whose edition utilized between four and six manuscripts dating from the twelfth century and later (cf. Aland and Aland 1989, 3-4, 72). Even though some earlier manuscripts were known, this meant that the effective gap between the originals and the earliest copies that were actually used was more than a thousand years. The number of manuscripts known, catalogued, and studied grew throughout the next two centuries, but the most dramatic manuscript discoveries came in the half-century or so after Joseph Smith. These discoveries included early codices of the New

Testament from the fourth century and the Oxyrhynchus papyri, among which were fragments of the Greek NT from the second and third centuries. Already when the Oxyrhynchus papyri were discovered at the very end of the nineteenth century, some three thousand Greek manuscripts of the NT were extant and had been catalogued (Aland and Aland 1989, 74). The gap between the original compositions and the earliest manuscripts of the NT had narrowed to three centuries at most and to one or two centuries for some parts of the NT.

During the twentieth century the number of catalogued Greek NT manuscripts increased by another two thousand or so and now stands at almost five thousand, and the gap at issue has narrowed further for much of the NT. Famously, P52, a fragment of the Gospel of John (containing John 18:31-33, 37-38) studied in the 1930s is generally dated about 125, within thirty years or so of the traditional date for the Gospel's composition. "Just as Robinson Crusoe, seeing but a single footprint in the sand, concluded that another human being, with two feet, was present on the island with him, so p[52] proves the existence and use of the Fourth Gospel during the first half of the second century in a provincial town along the Nile, far removed from its traditional place of composition (Ephesus in Asia Minor)" (Metzger and Ehrman 2005, 56). More broadly, Wallace reported that 43 per cent of the verses in the NT are found in extant manuscripts dating "within 150 years of the completion of the NT" (Wallace 2011, 30).

Admittedly a gap of about a century or more remains for most of the NT text. This gap, however, should be put in perspective. As already noted, other ancient or classical works of literature typically have gaps of a *thousand* years or more between their original compositions and the earliest complete or substantially complete copies. Furthermore, as the gap has narrowed for the NT writings the resulting critical text of the Greek NT has not changed substantially. "In the rush of manuscript discoveries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many people expected that the earliest texts of the New Testament would prove radically different from the traditional manuscripts handed down through the ages, but the need to revise our texts significantly did not materialize" (Welch 1999, 200). Only two passages longer than a single sentence have come to be regarded by most textual critics as later additions (*interpolations*) to the NT books in which they appear in the KJV (see Blomberg 2014, 18-21). Those two passages are the long ending of Mark

(16:9-20) and the pericope about the woman caught in adultery (John 7:52-8:11), each of which happens to be twelve verses long. Less than twenty isolated verses in the rest of the NT as found in the KJV are widely regarded as interpolations (the usual list includes Matt. 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36; 23:17; John 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Rom. 16:24; 1 John 5:7b-8a; and possibly Luke 22:43-44). Thus, roughly 40 verses of the KJV NT, out of 7,957 verses, are now regarded by most scholars as interpolations—about one-half of one per cent.

Even more striking than the extremely small number of interpolations that have been identified in the NT text is the fact that as earlier and larger numbers of manuscripts have been found, *not one sentence in these manuscripts has been identified as authentic missing text*. There is a small family of manuscripts, headed by the Codex Bezae (used at least a few times in the KJV), that are known as the "Western" text, and that contain in Acts roughly 25 to 30 sentences not included in the KJV or in modern versions. More specifically, Bezae contains about 800 words more than the standard modern editions of Acts in Greek (i.e., it is about 4 per cent longer). The consensus view among textual critics is that this additional material in Acts is secondary (see especially Head 1993). In no other part of the NT is there even this much textual variance. Thus the manuscript discoveries of the past two centuries have not uncovered as much as a single sentence recognized by biblical scholars as belonging in the NT that was missing from the KJV. Again, since the KJV was published scholars have narrowed the gap in their knowledge of the extant NT manuscripts from a thousand years after it was written to less than two centuries for half of the NT and only three centuries for the rest. This fact and the sheer volume of manuscript evidence now available strongly support the conclusion that the current text of the NT has no significant omissions. This judgment is one of probability, not mathematical certainty, but the probability in this case is extremely high that no future manuscript discoveries are likely to reveal authentic text that has been missing for centuries from the NT.

To recap what has been said so far: contemporary NT textual critics agree that no more than about one-half of one per cent of the NT text reflected in the KJV is not original or authentic and should therefore be omitted, and that no significant new material belonging to the 27 books of the NT—not even a single sentence—has

been discovered in all of the thousands of manuscripts catalogued and studied since the time of the KJV. If the traditional versions of the NT were missing anything substantial, the wealth of earlier manuscripts of the NT should have uncovered *something* missing by now. There is therefore very little chance that anything substantial was lost from the NT, or anything added beyond the forty or so verses that have long been recognized as suspect, during the gap between the original compositions and the earliest extant manuscripts. This judgment applies fully in regards to the text of the Gospel of Matthew.

Admittedly it is not realistic to expect *absolute certainty* with regards to the exact original wording of the text of Matthew down to *every single word*. If this is what Welch meant when he wrote, "Of course, it is impossible to know exactly what the original copy of Matthew's Gospel was like" (Welch 1999, 209 n. 5), one must of course agree. Historical knowledge of the exact wording of the original text of an ancient document in the absence of the original document or autograph will always fall somewhat short of an absolute 100.0 per cent certainty. This truism does not, however, justify scepticism or agnosticism concerning the text as a whole. For the text of Matthew and other books of the NT, the information available is sufficient to determine the original wording of the text to a very high degree of accuracy (clearly well over ninety per cent) with a high degree of confidence. For most of the words of Matthew, one may claim to know beyond a reasonable doubt what words Matthew used. For a small fraction of the words in the Gospel, judicious conclusions will be couched in varying lesser degrees of confidence (see earlier discussion in §3.3), and in a tiny number of instances it is appropriate to conclude that not enough evidence is available to favour one variant reading over another.

The only hope for defending the Mormon belief that the NT suffered *substantial* textual corruption at the hands of apostate church leaders and scribes is to hypothesize that such corruption took place during the second century. This is the thesis of an article by LDS scholar John Gee, who offered two arguments to support his conclusion. The first was that second-century Christians themselves spoke about such corruption taking place in their Scriptures. According to Gee, "By the early second century, Christianity had fragmented into dozens of splinter groups with each group charging that the other possessed both forged and corrupted texts" (Gee 2005, 164). If this were really so, it would seem to preclude the possibility of anyone

after the second century being able to sort out which texts were authentic and intact and which were either forged or corrupted beyond repair. Although Gee offered numerous citations from writers from the second and third centuries—especially Irenaeus and Tertullian—the citations on close inspection do not support this premise. The church fathers referred to a handful of sects in the second century (not dozens), and in most cases accused their leaders of misinterpreting Scripture, not of altering the texts of Scripture (e.g., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.7.3; 1.8.1; 1.9.4; 1.18.1; 1.19.1; 1.22.1-2; Tertullian, *Prescription against Heretics*, 17-18). Both Irenaeus and Tertullian singled out Marcion as the exception, not as the rule, with regard to the fact that Marcion used a truncated version of the Gospel of Luke. Irenaeus stated that Marcion "is the only one who has dared openly to mutilate the Scriptures" (*Against Heresies* 1.27.4; similarly Tertullian, *Prescription* 38). According to Tertullian, Marcion did this only with Luke, not with all of the Scriptures: "of the authors whom we possess, Marcion seems to have singled out Luke for his mutilating process" (*Against Marcion* 4.2).

Gee's other argument for a substantial corruption of the NT during the second century was that "those scriptural passages that are quoted by Christian authors at the beginning of the second century are different from those preserved in the scriptural canon" (Gee 2005, 165). However, not one of the "quotations" that Gee adduced was presented by the patristic writers as quotations from any specific books of the NT. In most if not all cases, the writer was either quoting loosely or inaccurately from memory, quoting from an apocryphal gospel text, or was quoting from oral traditions of sayings of Jesus in forms differing from those in the NT (e.g., 2 Clement 4.2, 5; see S. Young 2011, 244-48; cf. also Kraft 1961; Hagner 1973).

Ironically, Gee's arguments are based on texts for which our earliest manuscript evidence is far worse than it is for the NT texts themselves. That is, his argument treats the extant text of the patristic writings as reliable representations of what was written in the second century, even though in most cases the earliest extant manuscripts for those writings date from many centuries later. As Gordon Fee pointed out, the writings of the church fathers "may, and *must*, be evaluated in the same way as the manuscript evidence" for the NT itself (Fee 1978, 160). The same methodological fault applies to a similar article by Harvard scholar Helmut Koester (1989), who also cited 2 Clement and other early patristic sources to the same end.

Most surprisingly, both Koester (1989, 34-36) and Gee (2005, 168-69) even cited the so-called Secret Gospel of Mark, a truly apocryphal work for which one scholar (Morton Smith) claimed to show one manuscript that is now lost, if it ever existed, and that is almost certainly a modern forgery (see Carlson 2005; Jeffery 2007)!

The second line of criticism against the reliability of the NT text focuses on the large number of variant readings attested in the extant manuscripts. No one knows the precise number, but agnostic Bart Ehrman and evangelical Daniel Wallace, both renowned experts in the field, agreed that the number is roughly between 300,000 and 400,000 variants (Ehrman and Wallace 2011, 21, 28). As Wallace pointed out, this is an approximation of the number of variants or textual differences regardless of how many manuscripts contain them, not the aggregate of occurrences of the variants in all the manuscripts (Wallace 2009). Ehrman's most often repeated comment on the matter is that "there are more differences among our manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament" (Ehrman 2005, 10). (The Greek NT has about 140,000 words.) Such statements give the impression that every word of the NT is in doubt, which is simply not the case. Ehrman himself has said, for example, "I don't want to mislead you into thinking that scholars believe that we can never have any idea what Luke—or any of our other New Testament authors—wrote. For most passages, most sentences, most words, scholars are reasonably confident that we can know—even if there are other passages that remain in doubt" (Ehrman 2012, 26). As Welch acknowledged, "in an overwhelming majority of cases" the extant manuscripts "agree on the words, spellings, and conjugations in the Greek text of the Sermon on the Mount" (Welch 1999, 199).

Kurt and Barbara Aland, undisputed leaders in NT textual criticism in the second half of the twentieth century, provided an objective measure of the extent to which, as Ehrman put it, scholars "are reasonably confident" about the precise wording of the NT text. The Alands compared seven modern editions of the GNT (Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, the 25th edition of Nestle-Aland, and four others) to determine how many of 7,947 verses in the NT differed in these seven editions. Excluding orthographic (spelling) differences, they found that 4,999 verses were verbally identical in all seven editions—62.9 per cent. Matthew was average (59.9%), Mark had the lowest percentage of verses with variations in the seven editions (45.1%), and 1 Timothy had the highest (81.4%). "Verses in which any one

of the seven editions differs by a single word are not counted. This result is quite amazing, demonstrating a far greater agreement among the Greek texts of the New Testament during the past century than textual scholars would have suspected" (Aland and Aland 1989, 29).

The Alands' exclusion of orthographic differences is important because these easily account for the majority of the variants in the manuscripts. There is no exact count of such variants, but Ehrman gave an idea of just how numerous they are when he commented, "If scribes had had spell-check, we might have 50,000 mistakes instead of 400,000" (Ehrman and Wallace 2011, 21). Wallace distinguished four categories of textual variants in the NT, of which spelling variants is by far the largest (Wallace 2011, 40-41). The second largest category is that of variants that do not affect the meaning. In most cases the differences are not even translatable into English, as when a proper name in the Greek text includes or does not include the article (since, for example, one cannot write "the Joseph" in English), or when words appear in a different order within a Greek sentence (ibid., 41). The third category includes variants that affect the meaning but that are not viable because the manuscript support is too weak. Wallace gave as an example 1 Thessalonians 2:9, which has "the gospel of God" in all but one manuscript, a late medieval copy that has "the gospel of Christ" instead (ibid., 42).

The fourth and "by far the smallest" category, accounting for less than one per cent of all variants, is that of textual variants "that are both meaningful *and* viable" (43). Such variants are rarely if ever earth-shaking in their theological significance, but they are meaningful enough to affect the translation and precise meaning of the biblical statement to some degree. By "viable" is meant that it is at least somewhat possible that the reading is correct, not that it is probably correct or most likely. In the SM, a notable example of meaningful and viable variants occurs in Matthew 5:22, where some Greek manuscripts include the word *eikē*, "without a cause," and others do not. Some LDS scholars, noting that the parallel text in the ST omits the words "without a cause," have cited this textual issue as one in which the evidence supports the antiquity of the Book of Mormon version of the sermon (see above, §2.6, §2.11). Both variants in this case are meaningful and viable. It is really in regard to these types of variants that textual critics engage in significant argument or debate with one another as to the best reading.

Textual critics commonly divide textual variants (of any of the above four categories) into two basic types, which may be denoted accidental and deliberate or as unintentional and intentional. Accidental or unintentional variants are the results of a variety of simple mistakes (cf. Metzger and Ehrman 2005, 251-59; Patzia 2011, 230-235):

- misreading one or more similar-looking letters in the text
- inadvertently copying the same word or group of words twice (*dittography*)
- accidentally omitting letters or words (*haplography*)
- skipping one or two lines (*parablepsis*) because one of them ends with the same or a similar word as the line just copied (*homoeoteleuton*)
- writing a different word that sounds the same as the word being copied (*itacism*)
- transposing two words or two letters within the same word (*metathesis*)
- mistakenly assuming that a marginal comment in the manuscript being copied belonged in the text
- copying lines across adjacent columns (instead of copying one column after the other)

Deliberate or intentional changes are of potential greater interest, as such changes may seem more relevant to theories of systematic alterations of the biblical text in the early centuries of transmission. They include the following kinds of changes (Metzger and Ehrman 2005, 259-71; Patzia 2011, 235-42):

- improving the spelling, grammar, or style of the text
- harmonizing a text with a parallel passage (especially common with the Synoptic Gospels) or with the Old Testament passage it quotes or mentions
- making what the scribe presumes is a needed correction of a discrepancy, contradiction, or factual mistake in the text
- adding words or phrases for the sake of clarity or piety (e.g., expanding "Jesus" to "Lord Jesus" or "Lord Jesus Christ")
- conflating two variants so as to preserve both in the text (e.g., whereas older manuscripts of Acts 20:28 have "church of God" or "church of the Lord," some later manuscripts have "church of the Lord and God")
- adding words to conform the text to later liturgical form or religious practice

- changes reflecting theological concerns

The last of these kinds of changes—by all accounts a minority even of the deliberate changes made by scribes—has received a great deal of attention in NT textual criticism since Ehrman's academic monograph *The orthodox Corruption of the New Testament* (1993) and widespread public attention since the publication of his best-selling popular book *Misquoting Jesus* (2005). These books are often cited as establishing that the theological views expressed in the NT cannot be attributed confidently to their original authors. The inference drawn is that if it can be shown that scribes made changes to the NT texts for theological motives then the theology of the texts in their original or earliest forms is simply inaccessible. However, even Ehrman does not draw this conclusion, and it is not a valid inference from Ehrman's scholarly argumentation. To the contrary, every time Ehrman compares two variants and argues that one of them resulted from a scribe altering the text represented by the other variant for theological reasons, he is assuming that the other text is the earlier or original and that the theologically motivated variant is the later reading. Thus, Ehrman himself said that his project involved "extensive text-critical argumentation to distinguish *the earliest form of the text* from modifications effected during the course of the transmission" (Ehrman 1993, xii, emphasis added). Quite correctly, then, NT scholar Moisés Silva commented that Ehrman's argument "is unimaginable unless he can identify an initial form of the text that can be differentiated from a later alteration" (Silva 2002, 149).

The theological emendations to the NT text identified by Ehrman, though they each have some sort of theological point or significance, do not substantially affect the larger picture of the NT as a whole or suggest major revisions to the theologies of the individual NT authors. In some cases most NT scholars would agree with him as to which variants are the later theological changes and in other cases there is considerable debate, but either way the theological ramifications are minor at best. In all such texts the verbal differences are no more than a few words—usually just one or two—and either reading is generally consistent with the overall teaching of the NT. One of Ehrman's favourite examples, which he characterized as a "major change," comes in Mark 1:41, where most manuscripts (and translations) report that Jesus felt compassion, but some early manuscripts say that Jesus felt *anger* (e.g., Ehrman and Wallace 2011, 26; see below, §4.9.3). This variant certainly makes for

an interesting minor difference in the way we read the passage, but it does not substantially alter Mark's picture of Jesus, since elsewhere it is quite clear in the manuscripts and versions that Mark speaks of Jesus as both angry (Mark 3:5) and compassionate (Mark 6:34; 8:2; 9:22).

To conclude the argument presented here, the objections raised by such LDS scholars as Gee and Welch to the verbal reliability of the NT are not sound. While *absolute* certainty about *every* word is unattainable, *reasonable* certainty about *almost every* word is attainable, and in few if any instances where certainty is unattainable are the variants such that they would significantly alter the historical or theological import of the text.

4.2.4   Methods of New Testament Textual Criticism

NT textual criticism is not an exact science, and textual critics do not always agree on which reading is the earliest. However, it is incorrect to claim, as one Mormon leader did, that "any decision about what is 'oldest and best' is inherently subjective" (Morrison 2006, 15). Biblical manuscripts can be assigned to varying periods of time, albeit not usually to exact years (some medieval manuscripts were in fact dated), and reasonable criteria can and are employed to assess which of the variants in any particular case is most likely to be the earliest or original reading.

Reasoned eclecticism is the dominant method in the field of NT textual criticism. It seeks to determine the earliest, best reading of the text by considering both the *external* evidence for each variant from the extant manuscripts and the *internal* evidence of how the variants relate to one another and to the context in which they appear (see, for example, Holmes 1995, 2002; and for an article by LDS scholars on this method, see Griffin and Judd 2006). With regards to both types of evidence, the fundamental principle of textual criticism is that the reading that best explains how the others might have arisen if it were first is most likely the earliest reading (Metzger and Ehrman 2005, 300). The method gives priority to the readings of earlier manuscripts, most of which fall into the family of manuscripts known as the Alexandrian text tradition, but does not uncritically assume that certain manuscripts are always correct (contra Gee 1994, 69-70). As LDS biblical scholar Kevin Barney accurately stated, the principle is that "(all other things being equal) an older manuscript is more likely to be accurate than a younger one…. Blind acceptance of

one family over all the others is generally considered sloppy work" (Barney 2007, xvi, xvii).

Those scholars who follow reasoned eclecticism agree on the correct readings in Wallace's fourth category of variants (both meaningful and viable) in the vast majority of cases. This is the method that will be used in this study for considering relevant textual variants in the SM and how they compare with the text of the ST in the Book of Mormon.

On the basis of reasoned eclecticism and similar methods, there is a consensus among NT textual critics today on the general form of the Greek NT though not, as acknowledged earlier, on every single decision concerning textual variants. According to this consensus, the Greek text that was the basis for the KJV—commonly known as the Textus Receptus (TR)—was on the whole very accurate but is susceptible to refinement based on the many manuscript discoveries and more rigorous methods used by scholars in the past two centuries. The point was conceded by Welch even as he argued that the secondary readings in the TR reflected in the KJV (and in the Book of Mormon's version of the Sermon) for the most part do not significantly affect the meaning of the texts (Welch 1999, 199-203). Therefore, in this study the default or working version of the Greek NT will be the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland text (NA27; there is a 28th edition, but in the Gospels it has the same Greek text as NA27), which has the same text as the fourth edition of the United Bible Societies' (UBS) Greek NT. As needed and appropriate, alternative readings defended by Welch or other LDS scholars will be considered.

4.3 Language and Idiom

Although the Greek Gospel of Matthew has been accurately preserved down through the centuries, this would only mean that contemporary readers have a verbally reliable text of the SM if the Gospel was originally written in Greek. Thus, a Mormon might dispute objections to the authenticity of the ST based on verbal comparisons to the SM on the grounds that Matthew may have been originally written in a different language.

However, the consensus in contemporary biblical scholarship is that the Gospel of Matthew, like the rest of the New Testament, was indeed originally composed in Greek. All of the other ancient versions of Matthew for which there are

extant manuscripts, such as the Coptic, Syriac, and Latin versions discussed earlier (§4.2.2), show signs of originating later than the Greek text and of being dependent on it—that is, they all show signs of being translations from an existing Greek text of Matthew. No ancient Hebrew version or text of the Gospel survives, if there ever was one. Furthermore, within the Gospel itself are found passages in which the author explains Hebrew and Aramaic expressions for the benefit of his readers (Matt. 1:23; 27:33, 46).

This would be the end of the matter except for three considerations: studies of a "Hebrew Matthew" that are sometimes thought to show that the Gospel originated in Hebrew; references in the writings of the church fathers to a Hebrew Gospel attributed to Matthew; and linguistic elements in the text that scholars identify as Semitisms (i.e., as reflecting Hebrew or Aramaic verbal, grammatical, or stylistic influence). Various writers in modern times, especially in the twentieth century, have argued for one or more of these reasons that the canonical Greek Gospel of Matthew was translated from a lost original Hebrew or Aramaic Gospel (e.g., Torrey 1936; Zimmerman 1979).

4.3.1   Shem Tob's Hebrew Matthew

At one point in LDS scholar John Gee's polemical review of the book *New approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Metcalfe ed. 1993), Gee took issue with Stan Larson's comment that "there is no evidence that anything was written down in Jesus' Aramaic language" (Larson 1993, 117). According to Gee, Larson's statement was proven false by "the publication in 1987 of the Hebrew text of Matthew preserved in at least nine manuscripts" (Gee 1994, 68). In a footnote, Gee referred to George Howard's *The Gospel of Matthew according to a Primitive Hebrew Text* (Howard 1987). Is this really "the Hebrew text of Matthew"? In a word, no. Rather, it is one of several Hebrew *translations* of Matthew.

The Hebrew Matthew to which Gee referred is medieval, not ancient, although of course it was based on the Gospel of Matthew which is itself ancient in origin. The specific Hebrew Matthew examined by George Howard in the book that Gee cited is found in a late fourteenth-century (ca. 1385) Jewish polemical book against Christianity in Spain by Shem Tob ben Isaac, also known as Ibn Shaprut, entitled *Eben Bohan* ("Touchstone"), that includes quotations of the entirety of

Matthew and parts of Mark in Hebrew. (The extant manuscripts of *Eben Bohan* date from centuries after the time of Shem Tob. Thus, the manuscripts themselves date from the early modern era.) In his 1987 book George Howard suggested that Shem Tob's Hebrew Matthew was ancient and at least could be understood as implying the existence of a Hebrew Matthew that dated from about the same time as the Greek Gospel of Matthew. Following critical reviews and discussions, Howard released a second edition entitled *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew* (Howard 1995), which dropped the description "primitive" and for the most part argued for the more modest conclusion that Shem Tob's Hebrew Matthew originated significantly earlier than Shem Tob himself.

Despite this more modest claim, in places Howard continued to argue that some parts of the Hebrew Gospel were extremely early. Of special interest here is Howard's suggestion that the text of the SM found in this Hebrew Matthew may even go back to a first-century source used by the original author of the Gospel of Matthew (Howard 1995, 199-203). However, to support this idea Howard appealed to quotations of Matthew in Hebrew found in earlier works that may be more plausibly explained in other ways. For example, he cited an anti-Christian polemical work by Nestor the Priest (ca. 900) who added the words "subtract from" in his quotation from Matthew 5:17-18, but this was most likely the result of influence from the Aramaic form of the quotation given in the Talmud (Horbury 1997, 731). Howard also suggested that Shem Tob's sixteen divisions of the SM marked by introductory words such as "Jesus said to his disciples" could correspond to the sections of a SM source used by Matthew, but the introductory words are better explained as introducing Shem Tob's quotations within his polemic (Horbury 1997, 735-36).

The evidence thus falls far short of proving that Shem Tob's Hebrew Matthew *pre-dated* the canonical Greek Matthew, or even that it originated around the same time. It is far more likely that it was a translation from Greek into Hebrew done sometime well before Shem Tob but well after the Greek Gospel of Matthew had been firmly established. Taking two different approaches to the issue, William Horbury (1997) and William Petersen (1998a, 1998b) have shown that Shem Tob's Hebrew Matthew probably originated earlier in the medieval era (between about 900 and 1300). One of Petersen's important observations is that this Hebrew Matthew

contains numerous harmonisations of the text with the other Gospels, which demonstrates that it originated significantly later than the canonical Gospels.

In an article responding to Petersen, George Howard agreed that the evidence did not show that Shem Tob's Hebrew Gospel dated from the first century and explained that his argument was intended only to show that it dated from a period earlier than Shem Tob himself. "What I have argued is that a *Shem-Tob type Matthean text* (not Shem-Tob's Hebrew Matthew per se) has roots in an early period of Christian history; I do not presume that Shem-Tob's Hebrew Matthew goes back to early times" (Howard 1999, 7). This means that Shem Tob does not attest to a Hebrew Matthew predating the Greek Gospel of Matthew.

The evidence, as acknowledged by Howard himself, also does not support Gee's claim that "any attempt to reconstruct the original text of Matthew which fails to take this important version into account may justly be said to be defective as it preserves many early readings" (Gee 1994, 68). While of course *any* translation (ancient, medieval, or modern) will preserve many early readings of Matthew, variants found in a late fourteenth-century translation cannot overturn the evidence of nearly two thousand Greek manuscripts of Matthew dating from the second through the fourteenth centuries. It is therefore doubtful that Shem Tob's Hebrew Matthew should be given any weight in determining the original text of the Gospel of Matthew.

4.3.2   Patristic References to a Hebrew Matthew

Although the medieval Hebrew versions of Matthew for which there remains extant evidence almost certainly do not originate from the first or second century, there are other reasons to think a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew might have existed during those early centuries of Christianity. Perhaps the most compelling reason is that a good number of ancient Christian authors appear to refer to such a work and even quote from it in their writings.

By far the most important and most discussed of these references is the earliest, from a Christian bishop named Papias in the early second century (probably ca. 95-110, see Yarbrough 1983; Gundry 1994, 610-11). His comments about the origins of the canonical Gospels were quoted by the fourth-century Eusebius in his book *Ecclesiastical history*. Despite the not altogether satisfactory way in which

Papias's comments have been preserved, his close proximity to the time of the apostles makes them worth considering. The relevant sentence from Papias reads, "Matthew arranged [*sunetaxato*] the oracles [*ta logia*] in the Hebrew language [*Hebraidi dialektō*], and each interpreted [*hērmēneusen*] them as he was able" (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.16, citing Eusebius 1926). "Nearly every element in this sentence can be understood in more than one way" (Hagner 1993, xliv); specifically, all of the Greek words shown above are of disputed meaning in this context. The sentence has been explained in at least four ways. (1) Matthew produced a collection of Jesus' sayings in Hebrew or Aramaic (the word could refer to either language) that later became a source for the Gospels, including for the Greek Gospel of Matthew itself (Manson 1949, 16-20; M. Black 1989; Hagner 1993, xliii-xlvi; Witherington 2006, 29). (2) Matthew compiled a list of Hebrew Old Testament messianic "testimonies" that were then interpreted as applying to Jesus by others including the Gospel writers (F. C. Grant 1957, 65, 144). (3) Matthew composed the Greek Gospel that bears his name, arranging Jesus' sayings in a "Semitic rhetorical style," and readers interpreted those sayings as best they could (Kürzinger 1960; Gundry 1994, 619-20; Turner 2008, 15-16; Evans 2012b, 2-3). (4) Matthew composed a Gospel in the Hebrew or Aramaic language that later Gospel writers used as a source for their own work (Bauckham 2006, 222-29; Edwards 2009, 3-7).

Papias's statement is naturally understood by comparing it to his statement about the Gospel of Mark, also quoted by Eusebius, that "Mark, having become the interpreter [*hermēneutēs*] of Peter, wrote accurately, though not in order [*taxei*]," whatever Peter remembered the Lord saying or doing, and that Peter had "no intention of giving a connected account [*suntaxin*] of the Lord's oracles [*logiōn* or *logōn*]" (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.15). Here the word *hermēneutēs* appears to mean that Mark was Peter's "interpreter" in the sense of translating Peter's sermons or speeches about Jesus into Greek and composing the Gospel based on Peter's teaching. The statement that Peter did not give a *suntaxis* contrasts with the statement that Matthew *sunetaxato* and suggests that whereas Peter did not produce an ordered account of Jesus (i.e., a biographical account) Matthew did. Unfortunately, there is textual uncertainty (see McGiffert 1890, 173 n. 1) as to whether Eusebius referred to Peter's teaching of the Lord's "oracles" (*logiōn*) or "words, discourses" (*logōn*), but either reading suggests that *logiōn* in reference to

Matthew's work might refer more broadly to Christ's actions and teachings or to all the material in the canonical Gospel of Matthew.

Thus, a comparison of Papias's statements about Mark and Matthew tends to render less plausible (though not impossible) the theories that Papias was referring to a Jesus sayings source or to an Old Testament testimonies collection compiled by Matthew. The theory that Papias was describing the Gospel of Matthew as composed in a Hebraic rhetorical style depends on an unlikely and strained interpretation of the word *dialektō*, which in conjunction with the language term *Hebraidi* ("Hebrew") and in the immediate context of the word *hērmēneusen* ("interpreted") most likely means "language" (cf. Bauckham 2006, 223). This leaves the explanation that Papias was referring to a Gospel composed by Matthew in Hebrew or Aramaic.

The main objection to understanding Papias to refer to a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew is that the canonical Gospel of Matthew shows no signs of being a translation from a Hebrew original (see §4.3.3 below). Probably the best position that accounts for both Papias's statement and the evidence of the Greek Gospel of Matthew is that is that Papias was referring to an earlier work composed by Matthew, not the canonical Gospel of Matthew. This would mean that canonical Matthew is not simply a translation of the earlier Hebrew Matthew; rather, Hebrew Matthew was likely a source, directly or indirectly, used in the composition of canonical Matthew. In support of this hypothesis, James Edwards documented that many of the church fathers attested to and even quoted from a Hebrew Gospel, and the only author to whom they attribute it was Matthew (Edwards 2009). It is also possible that the canonical Greek Matthew was based primarily on the earlier Hebrew or Aramaic Matthew, without being simply a translation of the earlier work. Either way, the fact remains that the extant Greek Gospel of Matthew was not a translation of such a book.

4.3.3   Semitic Elements in the Greek Gospel of Matthew

The most important evidence pertaining to the original language of the canonical Gospel of Matthew is the internal evidence of the earliest language text that is extant, which is the Greek text. If it was a translation of a Hebrew or Aramaic original Gospel, the surest way to establish this as fact would be to find evidence in

the linguistic features of the Greek text that it is "translation Greek," similar to what scholars observe in the Septuagint (an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament). Throughout the twentieth century, several biblical scholars sought to demonstrate that canonical Matthew was translated from a Hebrew or Aramaic original by pointing to various elements in the Greek text that they identified as Semitisms (e.g., Torrey 1936; Zimmerman 1979). However, mainstream scholarship on the language of Matthew (and of the other Gospels) has increasingly approached something of a consensus that it is not translation Greek. The Greek of canonical Matthew is so far from being translation Greek that several scholars have theorized that the lost Hebrew Gospel attributed to Matthew by early church fathers was a translation of the Greek Matthew *into* Hebrew by second-century Jewish Christians (as noted by Edwards 2009, 254-55).

The issue that has therefore dominated scholarship on the language of the Gospels is not whether they were originally written in Aramaic, a hypothesis generally rejected, but whether the Greek of the Gospels is a distinct dialect or regional variety of Greek linguistically affected by Aramaic (so-called "Jewish Greek"). Nigel Turner, for example, argued that the "vocabulary and syntax" of the Greek Bible showed "that there was a distinguishable dialect of spoken and written Jewish Greek" that was "rather a separate dialect of Greek than a form of the Koine, and distinguishable as something parallel to classical, Hellenistic, Koine and Imperial Greek" (Turner 1965, 183). More recently Luz described Matthew's Greek as "synagogue Greek," "a Jewish, occasionally rabbinically influenced Greek" (Luz 2007, 22). On the other side is the position, exemplified especially by G. H. R. Horsley, that "Jewish Greek is a modern fabrication, anachronistically imposed upon the NT and certain other writings" (G. Horsley 1989, 5). He noted "that scarcely anyone outside the NT field who comments on the issue accepts the notion of Jewish Greek" (39).

> While it is not denied that certain Semitic features obtrude into Greek written by Jews and Christians in antiquity, where this occurs it is to be understood as the expected phenomenon of interference which manifests itself in varying degrees in the speech and writing of bilinguals" (G. Horsley 1989, 40).

A mediating view is represented by Davies and Allison in their three-volume commentary on Matthew. They argued that Matthew, whose Greek in general is

unremarkable, neither particularly bad nor impressively good, had the "ability to write on occasion accomplished Greek" though typically the result has a distinctly "Semitic flavour" (Davies and Allison 1988, 1:72).

The main reason why many if not most NT scholars have moved away from the idea that the Gospels were written in a special "Jewish Greek" is that linguistic elements in the Gospels that were often taken as Semitisms have been found in the numerous non-Jewish ancient *koinē* ("common") Greek papyri and inscriptions discovered and studied in modern times. Due to this explosion of ancient literary resources for the NT period, "Documentary evidence has brought the gospels and the NT in general out of the linguistic isolation that has dominated the field in much of the twentieth century" (Mathieson 2010, 66). Gustav Adolf Deissmann (1901, 1927) and scholars following him have found parallels for many of the supposed Semitisms of the Gospels in *koinē* Greek documents for which no Semitic influence can plausibly be suggested (Mathieson 2010, 66-67). Such parallels do not disprove Semitic influence, particularly when texts exhibit such constructions more commonly than typical of *koinē* texts (cf. S. Porter 1989, 587), but the cumulative effect of this evidence has been that the notion of a distinctly Jewish Greek is no longer tenable.

Luz, while describing Matthew's language as "synagogue Greek," made it clear that it was indeed "good Koine but not elegant literary Greek." Luz cited several examples of specific grammatical and lexical elements of Matthew's Greek that were typical of *koinē* ("common") Greek in the first century, such as "the absence of the optative and the future infinitive" and a preference for some prepositions over others, "such as *heōs* (instead of *mechri*) or *eis*" (Luz 2007, 22).

To sum up, the dominant if not consensus view in contemporary NT scholarship is that all of the NT books, including Matthew and the other Gospels, were originally composed in Greek, specifically the post-classical, *koinē* Greek used throughout the Mediterranean, Greco-Roman world in the first century (see also Caragounis 2006, 39-44; Rico 2010, 61-62). This conclusion has been acknowledged by at least some LDS scholars, such as Kevin Barney, who agreed that the NT books were originally written "in the koine (or common) Greek of the time" (Barney 2007, x). This conclusion does not preclude the possibility of some distinctive Aramaisms in Matthew, especially since, as almost everyone agrees, Jesus probably spoke Aramaic as his first language and did most of his teaching

and public speaking in Aramaic even if he may also have had some familiarity with Greek (see Silva 1980; G. Horsley 1989, 19-21; cf. Sevenster 1968, 25-38; Chancey 2005, 122-65). The LDS biblical scholar Thomas Wayment agreed with mainstream Gospel scholarship when he stated that "both Matthew and John appear to have been composed in Greek, using Aramaic sources" (Wayment 2005a, 25). Furthermore, as another LDS scholar, Eric Huntsman, has stated, "we can assume that when translating the words of Jesus" from Aramaic or perhaps in some instances Hebrew, "Matthew employed Greek terms that best represented the meaning of the Master's words" (Huntsman 2010, 106 n. 2).

This conclusion has two important implications for the present study. First, it means that the text of the SM in Greek may be used as a basis for comparison to the ST. Second, it means that the very language of the Gospel of Matthew confirms its historical origin as being a Jewish Christian of the first century. This historically appropriate linguistic context for Matthew has no counterpart for the Book of Mormon, for which the earliest extant version is in modern English (see chapter 6 for more on this point).

4.4 Contexts

There is no significant argument about the fact that the Gospel of Matthew originated in the first century AD and that its narrative is set in Israel or Palestine during the period of Roman rule prior to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in AD 70. With regard to the issues of relevance to this study, Mormons and evangelicals are generally in agreement as to the contextual authenticity of the Gospel narrative about Jesus Christ. For this reason, the evidence may be surveyed here with comparative brevity. The relevant information may be categorized into three major types of context: geographical, historical, and cultural contexts.

4.4.1   Geographical Context

Except for Matthew's account of the Magi coming "from the east" (2:1) and of the Holy Family's brief exile in Egypt when Jesus was an infant (Matt. 2:13-21), all of the events recounted in the Gospel are set in the land known in the Bible as Israel (cf. Matt. 2:20-21) and often for its Roman period called Palestine in modern scholarship. The exact locations of almost all of the places given specific names in

the Gospel are well known and beyond reasonable dispute—and many of them have been known continuously for the past two thousand years.

Matthew describes events at the Sea of Galilee (4:13-18; 15:29; see also 8:24-27, 32; 13:1; 14:25-26; 17:27) and the Jordan River (3:5-6, 13; 4:15, 25; 19:1), in the wilderness of Judaea (3:1, 3; 4:1; 11:7; cf. 24:26), and on some unnamed mountains (4:8; 5:1; 8:1; 14:23; 15:29; 17:1, 9; 28:16). He mentions the Roman province of Judaea (2:1, 5, 22; 3:1, 5; 4:25; 19:1; 24:16) and several cities or towns in Judaea: Bethlehem (2:1, 5-8, 16), Jerusalem (2:1, 3; 3:5; 4:25; 5:35; 15:1; 16:21; 20:17-18; 21:1, 10; 23:37), Jericho (20:29), Bethphage (21:1), Bethany (21:17), and Arimathea (27:57). Matthew places most of Jesus' ministry activity in Galilee (Matt. 2:22; 3:13; 4:12, 15, 23-25; 17:22; 19:1; 21:11; 26:32; 27:55; 28:7, 10, 16), mentioning several towns there: Nazareth (2:23; 4:13; 21:11; 26:71), Capernaum (4:13; 8:5; 11:23; 17:24), Chorazin and Bethsaida (11:21). He mentions that people came to see Jesus even from such places beyond Galilee as Syria, the Decapolis (a league of ten Gentile-dominated cities), and the area beyond the Jordan (4:25). Matthew also reports Jesus' movements in two regions or local areas near the western shore of the Sea of Galilee called Gennesaret (14:34) and Magadan (15:39) and near three cities just outside Galilee—Tyre and Sidon (15:21) and Caesarea Philippi (16:13). Of all these place names there is some uncertainty about the precise locations (not the existence) of Arimathea, Bethphage, and Magadan (see the articles on these place names in *ABD*, 1:378, 715; 4:463). The other places named in the Gospel are identified without controversy at specific locations.

Matthew also refers to several places in and around Jerusalem of relevance during the climactic week leading to Jesus' death and resurrection. These include the Mount of Olives (21:1), the temple (21:12), the high priest's palace (26:3), Gethsemane (26:26), a potter's field (27:7-8), the Pretorium (27:27), Golgotha (27:33), and Jesus' tomb (27:60). The exact locations of the temple and the other names places are all known, though an alternative to the traditional site of Golgotha is sometimes defended (*ABD*, 2:1071-73). Probable locations for the high priest's palace and even Jesus' tomb have been identified, though for some understandable reasons the latter is disputed.

That all of the roughly three dozen places mentioned in Matthew were actual locations in Jesus' day is rarely disputed by scholars of any stripe. Nor do Mormons

question the geographical elements of the Gospel. Indeed, the LDS Church has published maps of "The Holy Land in New Testament Times" and of "Jerusalem at the time of Jesus" on its official website (Intellectual Reserve 2014). These maps happen to show nearly all of the locations mentioned in Matthew, as well as locations specifically named in the other Gospels. The locations of these places are known today because most of them have always been known. Archaeology has sharpened modern knowledge of the location of a few of the smallest towns mentioned in the Gospel, such as Nazareth, but in general knowledge of the geographical context of the Gospel events is not dependent on archaeology.

The author of the Gospel, it should be noted, is completely unconcerned to demonstrate his geographical knowledge. Matthew makes absolutely no effort to provide specific information about the directions in which Jesus travelled during his itinerant ministry or about how long it took to go from one place to another. The positions of the different locations relative to one another thus generally cannot be determined from the text. No "travelogue" descriptions of the various locations are given. Instead, the text simply refers without elaboration or description to the various places where it states that various events took place. As shall be demonstrated later in this study (§6.4.1), the geographical references of the Book of Mormon are markedly different.

4.4.2   Historical Context

On the question of Matthew's historical credibility as a source of information about Jesus, scholarly opinion ranges across a spectrum from largely (though not entirely) sceptical to unreservedly affirmative views of Matthew's historical value. Generally speaking, Mormons tend to fall toward the latter end of the spectrum, as do evangelicals (for a good evangelical treatment, see Blomberg 2007a). However, LDS apologists sometimes resort to citing scholarly objections to the historicity of the Bible—even if they do not share that scepticism—to rebuff evangelical scepticism about the Book of Mormon's historicity. They suggest that such evangelicals operate by a double standard, giving uncritical credence to the Bible while taking a critical approach to the Book of Mormon. It is of course beyond the scope of this study to defend the historicity of all sixty-six books of the Bible. What can be done here, and what will prove useful for this study, is to provide an overview of the sorts of

evidences available that lend historical credibility to the Gospel of Matthew, since it is a single book that may be legitimately compared in this and other ways to the Book of Mormon. Such a review of the historical elements of Matthew will also be important for interpreting the SM, which is part of the Gospel of Matthew, in its historical context—a necessary part of interpreting the SM accurately.

Matthew places the birth of Jesus during the last years of Herod the Great (2:1-19) and his death and resurrection during the tenure of Pilate as governor of Judaea (27:2-27, 58-65). Luke also places the birth of Jesus during the reign of Herod the Great (Luke 1:5) and all four Gospels prominently name Pilate as the governor who ordered Jesus' crucifixion (see Mark 15:1-15, 53-54; Luke 23:1-24, 52; John 18:29-19:38). From such external sources as Josephus (see especially *Ant.* 17-18) it is known that Herod the Great died in 4 BC (Hoehner 1977, 12-13; *ABD*, 3:161-69) and that Pilate's rule in Judaea ended in the winter of 36/37 (Hoehner 1972, 313-17; *ABD*, 5:396), giving us a chronological framework within which Matthew's narration is placed. At least some LDS scholars have acknowledged these dates, which function as fixed data in historical scholarship (e.g., Holzapfel and Wayment 2005, 385-86, 393). On the basis of these dates, Matthew's account would require the conclusion that Jesus was born shortly before 4 BC (say, in 6 or 5 BC) and died sometime before AD 36.

Herod the Great was a notorious figure in the history of the Jewish people. Josephus reports that Herod had hundreds of his real or perceived enemies killed including one of his wives, several members of her family, two of his brothers-in-law (one of whom was the high priest), a group of Pharisees who supported a rival family, and three of his own sons (*Ant.* 15-17). Centuries later it was remembered that Augustus Caesar himself commented, "It is better to be Herod's pig [*huos*] than his son [*huios*]" (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.4). Although Matthew's report of the massacre of the innocents in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16-18) is not mentioned outside the Bible—probably because it involved a small number of children and was of little significance politically—it is perfectly consistent with Herod's character and *modus operandi* (France 1979; P. Maier 1998).

Also figuring in Matthew's account are several members of Herod's family, most notably three sons of Herod. Archelaus (see Matt. 2:22) was made ethnarch of Judaea and was later deposed by Caesar Augustus in AD 6, when Roman governors

began ruling Judaea. Antipas was made tetrarch of Galilee, where he ruled until he was deposed in AD 39. He is called simply Herod in the New Testament (Matt. 14:1-6; Mark 6:14-21; Luke 3:1, 19, etc.); he is called Antipas before the beginning of his tetrarchy but afterward Herod in Josephus (*Jewish War* 2.167), and is also called Herod on coins and inscriptions from his tetrarchy, all of which suggests that "Herod" functioned as his dynastic title (Hoehner 1972, 105-109). The third son was Philip, who figures in Matthew's account solely because his wife Herodias divorced him for Herod Antipas, who had John the Baptist beheaded for his condemnation of the affair (Matt. 14:1-12, see 14:3). Josephus also discussed Herodias and her daughter, whom Josephus named as Salome. What he said about their character and behaviour is quite consistent with the Gospel accounts, even though Josephus did not mention their role in John's execution (see Hoehner 1972, 136-57; *ABD*, 3:174-76; Keener 2009b, 173-75). Although the matter is somewhat complex and less than certain, Herodias's first husband Philip is most probably to be distinguished from another son of Herod (by a different mother) named Philip, who was made tetrarch of Trachonitis and neighbouring small territories (Hoehner 1972, 131-36; *ABD*, 3:160-61; cf. Luke 3:1). Matthew mentions that Philip indirectly when he refers to Caesarea Philippi ("Philip's Caesarea"), a city built by Philip near where Peter first confessed Jesus to be the Messiah (Matt. 16:13). Jewish supporters of the Herods, known as the Herodians, participate in at least one encounter with Jesus that Matthew narrates (Matt. 22:16).

Jesus' itinerant ministry, death, and resurrection are all presented in the Gospels as taking place during the time that Pilate ruled Judaea. Pontius Pilate took office as governor there either in AD 26 (so most scholars) or, according to an alternative view of the evidence, earlier in AD 19 (*ABD*, 5:396-97). Pilate served in that capacity at the appointment of the Roman emperor, Tiberius, also known by his dynastic title of Caesar, as in Jesus' discussion with the Herodians (Matt. 22:17, 21). The Romans had conquered Palestine in 63 BC, when Rome was still a Republic, and the Jews found Roman occupation religiously offensive and culturally oppressive.

Pilate is known to historians from a surprising number of sources including the Roman historian Tacitus, Josephus, all four Gospels and the Book of Acts, the Jewish philosopher Philo (who lived at the same time as Pilate), and even a

contemporary inscription referring to him as "prefect of Judaea" (Frova 1961; Vardaman 1962). Because of the diversity of these sources—some pro-Roman, some Jewish, some Christian—their characterizations of Pilate are not easily harmonized. In any case, historians universally agree that the Gospels are correct at least in the essential point that it was Pilate who authorized the crucifixion of Jesus (for somewhat differing analyses of the political and cultural factors involved, see P. Maier 1968; McGing 1991; Barnett 1997, 84-90; Bond 1998, 2007; Evans 2006, 330-38; Joan Taylor 2006; Messner 2008). Even such a controversial element of the Gospel narrative as Pilate's offer to release Barabbas instead of Jesus (Matt. 27:15-26) is at least plausible in its political and cultural setting (see Chavel 1941; cf. Merritt 1985, who after showing the plausibility of the account nevertheless views it as a Markan fiction).

In addition to Caesar, Pilate, and the Herods, the Gospel of Matthew refers to a number of individuals and religious groups within the Jewish population. Matthew and the other four Gospels all mention the Sanhedrin (the Greek word *sunedrion* meant a council or court), the council of Jewish leaders that convened in Jerusalem and that handed Jesus over to Pilate for Roman trial and execution (Matt. 26:59; Mark 14:55; 15:1; Luke 22:66; cf. John 11:47). The Sanhedrin's presiding figure at the time was the high priest Caiaphas (Matt. 26:3, 57-65). Josephus (*Ant.* 18), who identifies him as "Joseph called Caiaphas," reports that he was one of seven members of a powerful Jewish family headed by Annas (mentioned by both Luke and John) to hold that office during the first century. During Roman occupation the high priests were appointed and controlled by the Roman governors, who installed and deposed high priests at will, and Caiaphas occupied that office far longer than anyone else in the first century (AD 18-36). Thus it is clear that Caiaphas enjoyed a close and successful working relationship with Pilate.

No historian, of course, questions the existence of Caiaphas or his involvement in the events leading to Jesus' execution (see Bruce Chilton, "Caiaphas," *ABD* 1:803-806). Nevertheless, the possible discovery in 1990 of his ossuary (a limestone box used by Jews in the first century as the resting place of the dried bones of the deceased) created significant interest. The inscriptions on the ossuary read "Joseph son of *Qayafa*" on one side and "Joseph son of *Qafa*" on the other. This is not an exact match, since the high priest was Joseph *called* Caiaphas,

not *the son of* Caiaphas; for this and other reasons some scholars now have serious doubts about identifying the ossuary as that of the high priest (see Evans 2012a, 97-100, and references cited there). Meanwhile, in 2011 another ossuary was discovered at another location in the Jerusalem area that contained the inscription "Mariam the daughter of Yeshua, son of Qaiyapha," i.e., Mary the daughter of Jesus, son of Caiaphas. Since the names *Mary* and *Jesus* were among the most common Jewish names of the period, no connection with Jesus of Nazareth or his mother is to be inferred here. On the other hand, the ossuary, which the Israel Antiquities Authority declared authentic, may well have belonged to the granddaughter of Caiaphas the high priest (Zissu and Goren 2011), and some scholars, such as epigraphic expert Christopher Rollston (2011), argue that both ossuaries refer to the high priest named in the Gospels.

Although the term *sunedrion* might be used in the singular or plural to refer to various kinds of councils and courts (e.g., Matt. 5:22; 10:17), its most familiar use in the NT is in reference to the Jerusalem Sanhedrin (cf. *ABD*, 5:975-80). Presided over by the high priest, the Sanhedrin among other things maintained control over the temple, the centre of Jewish worship run by the priests where sacrifices were offered daily and where thousands of Jews gathered from all over the Mediterranean world for the feasts. Other than those who ascended to high priest, most of its members would be unknown figures of history. One such member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea, would be unknown today by name except for his support of the rabbi from Nazareth (Matt. 27:57-60). The Sanhedrin was a council that met in Jerusalem and that counted among its members the high priests, other chief or ruling priests, elders (essentially, leading or prominent Jewish citizens), and scribes (Matt. 2:4; 16:21; 21:23; 26:3, 47, 57-65; 27:1, 3, 12, 20, 41; 28:11-12). Its political role was, on the one hand, to act on behalf of Rome to make sure that the people kept in line and did not revolt and, on the other hand, to maintain religious and judicial authority at least nominally in Jewish hands and to represent Jewish concerns to Rome's representatives so that the people would not be as inclined to revolt. The Gospels' portrayal of the Sanhedrin as largely concerned with maintaining the status quo is therefore historically quite realistic.

The historical setting of the teaching of Jesus and of the Gospel of Matthew, then, was one in which the Jewish people had lost their political independence, as

had so many other nations, to the Roman Empire. The importance of the Jewish and Roman historical and political context of Matthew's account is not limited to the historical accuracy of the Gospel, as crucial as that is in its own right. The context is also of great importance to the understanding of the Gospel, and specifically for the purposes of this study to the interpretation of the SM. Whatever "timeless" or transcendent values the SM may express, that expression took shape in the context of the first-century Jewish people in Palestine under the oppressive rule of the Caesars and the policies of accommodation practised by the Herods and the Sanhedrin. One question to be considered in assessing the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon version of the Sermon (the ST) is the extent to which it contains statements that specifically reflect the Jewish-Roman context of the SM (§7.6).

4.4.3 Cultural-Religious Context

Since geography, culture, and history are intertwined, much of what has been said about the geographical and historical context of the SM in Matthew is also relevant to its cultural context. The author of the Gospel and its subject Jesus of Nazareth belonged to the first-century Jewish culture that was imbedded in the wider Greco-Roman civilization. As discussed earlier, first-century Jews lived in a multilingual society. The Semitic languages of Hebrew and Aramaic connected them to their Scriptures, and Aramaic remained the primary language of Jews in Palestine. Yet for over three centuries Greek had been the lingua franca of the eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern world, and the Romans had more recently introduced Latin along with their military and political presence. In Jesus' day the Scriptures, written mostly in Hebrew though with some later elements in Aramaic, had already been translated into Greek.

Although Greek and Roman cultural influences were present throughout Palestine in the first century, one must be careful not to overstate the extent of these influences. In particular, archaeological evidence suggests that Hellenization and Romanization were not homogeneous phenomena. There were a few relatively Hellenized cities in or near Galilee, but in most Galilean towns and villages Hellenization had comparatively little impact. Even Sepphoris, a city easily visible from Nazareth in Jesus' day, probably was predominantly Jewish culturally (e.g., Reed 2000, 100-138; Chancey and Meyers 2000; Chancey 2001, 2007; Freyne

2004b; Keener 2009b, 21-22, 178-79; Evans 2012b, 21-28). For example, archaeologists have noted the lack in the first century there of pig bones, which would typically be found in some abundance in the refuse of Gentile cities.

In Jesus' time the Romans treated Galilee as a client kingdom in which the Herods ruled with relative autonomy, while Judea was ruled directly by Roman governors after Augustus deposed Archelaus in AD 6. The Romans had military installations at Caesarea Maritima, the official administrative capital of the province of Judea, and in Jerusalem, but otherwise probably had little day-to-day military presence in most areas of Palestine (Chancey 2005, 43-50, 69). For a brief time Judea was reinstated as a client kingdom under Herod Agrippa I (AD 41-44), but when he died the Romans placed the entire region under provincial rule (see M. Smith 2010). Whether they were ruled by one of the Herods or by a Roman governor, Jews in both Judea and Galilee generally viewed the Romans as unclean usurpers doomed to God's eventual judgment.

Some Jews, however, especially wealthy and powerful residents in and around Jerusalem, cooperated with the Romans. One group that had particularly close ties to the Roman authorities was the priests, who (as mentioned earlier) depended on Roman support for their control over the temple and its operations. The temple establishment was apparently associated in some way with the sect or party known as the Sadducees, mentioned 14 times in the New Testament (half of these references are in Matthew). (For a treatment of the Sadducees and other first-century Jewish groups by a Mormon scholar, see Chadwick 2005, 49-69.) The derivation of the term "Sadducees" is uncertain; a common suggestion is that it derived from *Zadok*, the Hebrew name of the high priest for both David and Solomon (2 Sam. 8:17; 15:24-36; 1 Kings 1:26-45; 2:35; 1 Chron. 24:3, 6; 29:22; etc.) as well as later figures in Jewish history. The book of Ezekiel mentions the house or sons of Zadok as faithful priests honoured by the Lord (Ezek. 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). If this derivation is correct, the Sadducees may have been "Zadokites" in the sense of claiming religious or spiritual continuity with the ancient priestly tradition of the Zadokite family. The main difficulty with this etymology is that the Sadducees were supporters of the clearly non-Zadokite Hasmonean high priestly line that began with Simon Maccabaeus (F. F. Bruce 1972, 3-6, 74). Alternatively, the name Sadducee may have derived from the Hebrew *saddiq*, "righteous" (74).

In the book of Acts, the Sadducees are closely tied to the Jerusalem temple priesthood (Acts 4:1; 5:17), and both Josephus (*Ant.* 18.17; 20.199) and the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Yoma* 19b) refer to Sadducean high priests. It therefore seems best, with the majority of scholars, to conclude that the Sadducees viewed themselves as partisans if not custodians of the temple and priesthood system. This conclusion need not assume that all priests were Sadducees or that all Sadducees were priests (*contra* Porton 2000, who questions the relationship between the Sadducees and the Jerusalem priesthood).

The best-known fact about the Sadducees is that they rejected belief in the resurrection of the dead, a fact attested in Josephus, the New Testament, and the Talmudic literature (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.16-17; Matt. 22:23-29; Mark 12:18-23; Luke 20:27-33; Acts 23:6-8; *Avot Rabbi Nathan* A.5). In this respect the Sadducees stood in contrast to the Pharisees, the most prominent religious party or movement in Jesus' day. The New Testament refers to the Pharisees 98 times, including 29 references in Matthew alone.

More information about the Pharisees is available than for the Sadducees: the apostle Paul was himself a former Pharisee (Acts 23:6; 26:5; Phil. 3:5), Josephus provides information about the Pharisees in his writings, they are described (though not named) in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and there was apparently some relationship (what sort is highly contested among scholars) between the Pharisees of the Second Temple period and the rabbinical tradition that emerged after the temple's destruction in AD 70. Like the Sadducees, the Pharisees emerged in Jewish history during the Hasmonean era about the second half of the second century BC, although there is no specific information about their origins. The name is usually derived from the Hebrew *perûšîm* meaning "separatists," which can be construed as either complimentary (pure ones) or pejorative (sectarians). It has also been derived from *pārôšîm*, "specifiers," meaning accurate interpreters (Baumgarten 1983). The Pharisees no doubt thought of themselves as accurate interpreters of the Torah and therefore as the teachers of authentic religious purity. More specifically, the Pharisees' religious concerns, at least in Jesus' time, appear to have focused on ritual purity, Sabbath-keeping, tithing, and individual conformity to the demands of the Torah (cf. Saldarini 2001, 286). A majority of Jews appear to have been aligned theologically and religiously more with the Pharisees than with any other party. The

Pharisees were closely associated with the scribes and appear to have held widespread influence, especially through the synagogues, as interpreters and teachers of the Torah. According to Matthew, Jesus acknowledged the Pharisees' authoritative position within Israel as interpreters of the Torah even as he challenged specific interpretations as well as the actual practices of the Pharisees as hypocritical (Matt. 23:2-36; see Rabbinowitz 2003; Simmonds 2009).

Many scholars today view most or all of the written sources of information about the Pharisees with suspicion (see especially the essays in Neusner and Chilton 2007), none more so than the Gospel of Matthew, in which Jesus repeatedly castigates the Pharisees as hypocrites. Matthew's Gospel has 14 of the 22 NT occurrences of the term *hypocrite*, most or all of them directed explicitly or implicitly at the Pharisees (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 15:7; 22:18; 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27-29; 24:51). It is widely assumed that this language reflects religious conflict between Pharisaic and Christian Jews in Matthew's Jewish community rather than conflict between Jesus and Pharisees in his day. Yet it is all but undeniable that Jesus and the Pharisees did come into conflict, a fact attested in all four Gospels in a variety of contexts. Both Mark and Luke also quote Jesus as describing the Pharisees as hypocrites (Mark 7:5-6; 12:13-15; Luke 12:1). It is interesting to note that the Qumran scrolls describe the Pharisees, whom they call "seekers of smooth things," as "those who walk in lies and falsehood" and "lead astray" those who accept their teaching (Rabbinowitz 2003, 440, citing 4Q169; Schiffman 1992, 32). Jesus and his followers were not the only Jews of the time who were harshly critical of the Pharisees.

As D. A. Carson noted thirty years ago and as is still the case today, scholars that attribute the negative view of the Pharisees to Matthew rather than to Jesus cannot even agree as to the context of Matthew's polemic (Carson 1982, 161-62). Some scholars argue that Matthew's Jewish Christians were still very much part of the synagogue, while others maintain that they had already broken with the synagogue—and perhaps been excommunicated. Moreover, there is no consensus as to the similarities and differences between Pharisaism and the rabbinical Judaism that began to emerge at the end of the first century. Some view the rabbinical tradition as the continuation of Pharisaism, others view the two movements as having rather little in common, and some even view Pharisaism as an extreme

movement of "proto-rabbis" repudiated by the later rabbis (Carson 1982, 164). While it is legitimate to investigate the *Sitz im Leben* of the Gospel of Matthew, it is fallacious to do so by assuming that Matthew's presentation of Jesus is an anachronistic reflection of Matthew's own religious context, about which there are many unanswered questions.

The topics of discussion in Jesus' teaching recorded in Matthew are in keeping with the religious and cultural context of his ministry in Galilee and Judea. Under the shadows of the Roman Empire and the Hellenized rule of the Herods, the subject of the kingdom of God had pointed relevance. God's kingdom is a major theme in Jesus' teaching; it is mentioned 50 times in Matthew, 16 times in Mark, and 40 times in Luke. In his teaching, Jesus commented on the same sorts of issues being discussed by Pharisees and other Jewish teachers in the first century. These included the keeping of the Torah ("Law"); moral expectations concerning marriage, adultery, and divorce; how to handle conflicts with the Gentiles and other enemies in their midst; the standards of genuine piety in such areas as almsgiving, tithing, prayer, oaths, and fasting; matters pertaining to ritual purity and impurity (uncleanness, defilement), food laws, and the Sabbath; the paying of taxes, especially to support the Roman authorities; and the prospects for the fulfilment of the prophetic hopes given in the Scriptures. While many or most of these issues might come up in other cultures, the constellation of these issues as a whole and the ways in which they are addressed in Jesus' teaching are quite specific to that first-century Jewish society in Galilee and Judea.

Understanding the historical, cultural, and religious context of Matthew is quite important to the correct interpretation of the SM. As shall be shown later in this study (§7.5-6), the SM is not a "timeless" composition. Though it is applicable to people all over the world and from one generation to the next, its specific contents and wording in various ways reflect its equally specific origin. This historical rootedness of the SM will have significance not only for interpreting it accurately but also for comparing its contents to those of the ST in the Book of Mormon.

4.4.4   Social-Cultural Context: Honour and Shame

Another aspect of the proper interpretation of Matthew and more specifically of the SM is reading it in the context of the often unspoken cultural assumptions and

values of the people involved. It is therefore important to recognize that Matthew's account of Jesus reflects the broader social and cultural values and perspectives of people in ancient Mediterranean culture, which often differ from those of modern readers. Amy Hardison, a Mormon scholar, wrote an excellent overview of this context of Matthew's presentation of Jesus entitled "The Sociocultural Context of the Sermon on the Mount" (Hardison 2010). A brief overview of her essay was provided earlier in this study (§2.12). Hardison pointed out that modern readers of the Gospels commonly labour under the false presupposition that the same values that prevail in modern society also prevailed in the culture of Jesus and his disciples. "We have different core values, which means that to some degree we actually think differently and feel differently than a citizen of the ancient Mediterranean world. To fully understand the New Testament, we must bridge this sociocultural gap" (24). Hardison identified three sociocultural aspects of the ancient Mediterranean world of special importance: "honor and shame, patronage, and a limited-good society" (25).

The ancient Mediterranean culture in which Jesus and his disciples lived was oriented to groups (such as families and villages) rather than being individualistic, and the primary value was honour—not to be confused with what modern Westerners think of as individual self-esteem (Hardison 2010, 25). Ground-breaking research on this subject was done by Jean G. Peristiany, Julian Pitt-Rivers, and other anthropologists beginning in 1959 (see Peristiany 1966, 9). By *honour* is meant both "the value of a person in his own eyes" and his value "in the eyes of his society" (Pitt-Rivers 1966, 21). According to Peristiany, "Honour and shame are the constant preoccupation of individuals in small scale, exclusive societies where face to face personal, as opposed to anonymous, relations are of paramount importance and where the social personality of the actor is as significant as his office." In modern Western society, on the other hand, "Social mobility and urbanization have completely altered our outlook" (11, 12). Peristiany and his fellow anthropologists developed their models of the honour-shame value system by examining such relatively isolated cultures as Andalusia (in southern Spain), a highland village in Cyprus, the Kabyle people in northern Algeria, and the Bedouins of the western desert region of Egypt.

This anthropological honour-shame model was applied to NT studies by Bruce J. Malina in a work originally published in 1981 entitled *The New Testament*

World (Malina 2001). Malina used a definition of honour essentially identical to that of Pitt-Rivers: "Honor is the value of a person in his or her own eyes (that is, one's claim to worth) *plus* that person's value in the eyes of his or her social group" (30). In a positive sense, shame denotes a proper "sensitivity to the opinions of others" or to the "honor rating" by which society evaluates a person's behaviour, whereas a "shameless person" is one who fails to recognize or who disregards the "boundaries" of social propriety and so who dishonours himself and those associated with him (49). Malina argued that the core values of honour and shame in contemporary Mediterranean cultural groups such as those studied by Peristiany and his colleagues were also the core or pivotal values (not the *only* values) of the ancient Mediterranean world of the NT (52). Malina's book was one of several seminal works that led to the formation in 1989 of the Context Group, an association of (mostly NT) biblical scholars working in the application of the social sciences in biblical studies (www.contextgroup.org). Notable members of this group have included Zeba Crook, John H. Elliott, Philip S. Esler, K. C. Hanson, Bruce J. Malina, Jerome Neyrey, Douglas E. Oakman, Carolyn Osiek, John J. Pilch, and Richard L. Rohrbaugh.

Malina's cultural anthropological model of NT society has not gone unchallenged. Critics have posed various criticisms, including that the model can overwhelm the facts and ignores salient differences between the isolated cultural groups studied by modern anthropologists and ancient Mediterranean society or societies (e.g., Lawrence 2003). Canadian scholar Zeba Crook, following critical exchanges with Lawrence concerning her objections to Malina's model and its application to Matthew (see Crook 2006, 2007, and Lawrence's reply to the second article in Lawrence 2007), proposed some modifications to Malina's model (Crook 2009). Whereas Malina maintained that challenges to a person's honour were appropriate only from one's peers or equals, Crook argued that in the ancient Mediterranean world such challenges could come from those below or above one's social status. Gender (which plays a large, determinative role in Malina's model) and status did not predetermine honour even though they could play a role as people took them into consideration in specific situations. Crook urged scholars to "move away from a binary model with honor on one end and shame on the other, with men on one end and women on the other, with the elite on one end and the non-elite on the other, with ascribed honor on one end and acquired honor on the other" (610).

Malina's specific interpretations of the NT are also often problematic. For example, he interpreted diverse supernatural occurrences in the NT, such as the dreams reported in Matthew's infancy narrative, Jesus' testing in the wilderness, the disciples seeing Jesus walk on the sea, Jesus' transfiguration, and the resurrection appearances of Jesus to the disciples as "altered states of consciousness" or ASCs (e.g., Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003, esp. 327-29; Malina 2009, 177, 179-80). Malina reinterprets Jesus essentially as a shaman (Malina 2009, 175-80).

Despite such problems with Malina's anthropological model and especially with his own interpretation of the Gospels, something approaching a consensus in modern biblical scholarship acknowledges the validity and usefulness of recognizing honour and shame as "pivotal" or fundamental in NT society (of the numerous relevant works, see especially Moxnes 1996; deSilva 2000; Rohrbaugh 2010). Ancient writers sometimes made this perspective explicit, as in Aristotle's statement that "honour is clearly the greatest of external goods…. It is honour above all else which great men claim and deserve" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 4.3.9-12, cited in Neyrey 1998, 5). The honour-shame value system has been fruitfully demonstrated to illuminate practically every book of the NT, notably Hebrews (deSilva 1995), 1 Peter (Campbell 1998), Philippians (Hellerman 2005), and Matthew (Neyrey 1998). David A. deSilva and Joseph H. Hellerman are two evangelical scholars who have made especially significant applications of "Context Group" research to NT studies (for a helpful overview including a discussion of "potential pitfalls," see deSilva 2004).

One may see in many places throughout Matthew (as in the other Gospels) that honour and shame functioned as primary or preeminent values in the first-century culture of Jesus and his disciples (as argued at great length in Neyrey 1998; see also deSilva 1999, 34-69; deSilva 2004, 280-90). When a Roman centurion asked Jesus to heal his servant boy, he treated Jesus as having greater honour than himself by saying that he was "not worthy" to have Jesus come to his house (Matt. 8:5-8). Few individuals showed such humble deference to Jesus' honour, since the pursuit of honour was seen as a zero-sum game: one person's increase in honour could only come at the expense of someone else. Thus, many of the people in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth were offended by Jesus, who was after all only "the carpenter's son" (Matt. 7:55; cf. Neyrey 1998, 18). As Jesus commented wryly, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household"

(Matt. 13:57). One of the major themes of the Gospels, including Matthew, is that although Jesus was dishonoured by his people's rejection and by the condemnation of the Roman authorities, he was supremely honoured by God the Father. Hence Matthew's Gospel climaxes with the risen Christ's statement, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18).

The Gospels also report many controversies that Jesus had with the Pharisees and others who were critical of him; these confrontations take the form of challenges to Jesus' honour calling for a "riposte" that deflects the dishonour back to the challenger. Such challenge-riposte confrontations were a familiar element of honour-shame cultures (frequently discussed in the literature, e.g., Neyrey 1998, 16, 20-21; deSilva 2000, 28-31). So, for example, the questions posed by the Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees were not mere theological debating points but challenges to Jesus' status as a teacher or prophet (Matt. 22:15-40).

Jesus' teaching often challenged conventional ideas in his society regarding honourable activity. Consider, for example, the following criticism of the Pharisees: "They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others" (Matt. 23:5-7). Modern readers of the Gospel of Matthew often misunderstand such statements by Jesus as calling for a completely privatized faith—as though Jesus might oppose all public displays or expressions of religious conviction. Such interpretations miss the point, which was that Jesus was censuring the motivation of doing good things to attain honour from other people. The cultivation of one's own honour in society through benevolences and acts of piety was regarded as a normal and proper pursuit. Thus, as Jerome Neyrey argues, Jesus was in effect challenging the Pharisees for doing what in their culture seemed perfectly appropriate: seeking honour among other people through their religiosity and works (Neyrey 1998, 26-27).

4.5 Use of the Old Testament

Since both Matthew (and the rest of the NT) and the Book of Mormon make use of the Old Testament (OT), one useful comparison to make between the two concerns their respective uses of the OT. Furthermore, Matthew's use of the OT is

an important issue in the interpretation of the SM. Therefore, it is important for the present study to give some consideration to how Matthew makes use of the OT.

Matthew famously emphasizes more overtly than the other three Gospels the theme of Jesus "fulfilling" the Scriptures. R. T. France has even argued that "fulfilment" is the central theme of the Gospel of Matthew (France 1998, 166-205). Forms of the verb *plēroō* ("fulfil") occur 17 times in Matthew, at least 14 times in reference to fulfilling Scripture (1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 21:4; 26:54, 56; 27:9; see also 3:15). Matthew includes 60 or so quotations from the OT as compared to about 75 quotations in the other three Gospels combined (Archer and Chirichigno 1983, xix-xx). The longest of these is about 61 words in Greek (Matt. 12:18-21, quoting Isa. 42:1-3, 4b). (The longest OT quotation anywhere in the NT, Hebrews 8:8-12, is 131 words and quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34.) Matthew's quotations often agree with the Septuagint but about as often depart from it, either "reflecting a more literal translation from the Hebrew text or adopting a Hebrew or Aramaic variant that had developed in Jewish tradition" (Blomberg 2007b, 2).

Usually there is no problem identifying the source of Matthew's quotation in the canonical books of the OT. In one controversial and oft-discussed text, Matthew attributes to "the prophets" a statement not found per se in any known pre-Matthean text: "that he will be called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23 HCSB). As Blomberg observed, "The fact that this is the only place in the entire Gospel where Matthew makes reference to 'prophets' in the plural (rather than a singular 'prophet') as the source of an OT reference suggests that he knows that he is not quoting one text but rather is summing up a theme found in several prophetic texts" (Blomberg 2007b, 11). This understanding is reflected in the HCSB and in several other recent English versions (such as the ESV, NET, and NIV). There is no need or grounds for the popular LDS claim that Matthew 2:23 cites from a "lost" Scripture (e.g., D. Ludlow 1982, 33; Millet 1986, 153).

Most of Matthew's explicit Scripture quotations appear in his narrative material, cited by the author to comment on the significance of the events he reports. As will be discussed in detail later in this study (§7.6.7), the six quotations in the "antitheses" in the SM (Matt. 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) are in most instances not simply quotations from the Torah but representations of Pharisaic or scribal uses of the Torah that Jesus is correcting. Elsewhere Matthew presents Jesus a dozen

times as explicitly quoting Scripture (Matt. 11:10; 13:14-15; 15:8-9; 19:4-5, 18-19; 21:13, 16, 42; 22:37, 39, 44; 24:15; 26:31). These quotations come from four of the five books of the Torah, from five OT prophets, and from the Psalms.

A critical issue relating to Matthew's use of the OT is whether any of his narrative material was fictional "midrash" created to present Jesus as fulfilling Scripture (e.g., Goulder 1974; Gundry 1982). Comparisons of Matthew to Mark and Luke may demonstrate some literary elements and theological emphases distinctive to Matthew, but these fall short of demonstrating that any of the events narrated in the book were fictitious (Moo 1983; Cunningham and Bock 1987). As shown in the previous section (§4.4), the evidence for the historical reliability of the Gospel of Matthew is substantial. Thus, the radical claim that the Gospel narratives are more midrashic fiction than fact (e.g., Price 2004) is simply not tenable (see Eddy and Boyd 2006, 343-50, and the responses to Price in Beilby and Eddy 2009). A more nuanced view acknowledges that Matthew's text contains "midrashic elements" without suggesting "that these passages are therefore necessarily unhistorical" (Keener 2009a, 81). In fact, midrash was in essence reflection that related recent events to ancient Scripture texts, not the creation of pious fictions on the basis of those ancient Scripture texts. "In the NT era, midrash designated the exposition of Scripture and had nothing to do with the assimilation of historical and nonhistorical elements. Midrash, as applied to first-century literature that is intentionally and essentially nonhistorical, is a misnomer" (Quarles 1996, 462-63).

The most often discussed issue with regard to Matthew's use of the OT is one that is also relevant to other parts of the NT: the meaning of its assertions that various events, especially those involving Jesus, "fulfilled" OT texts. The question here is whether the NT is claiming that the OT texts it quotes were directly predictive about those NT events, and if so whether the OT texts in their original contexts really are predictions of such events. Evangelicals currently entertain a spectrum of views on this subject (see especially Berding and Lunde 2008). Most evangelical scholars think that in some instances the OT texts are literal predictions concerning the Messiah, but that in many or even most instances NT texts appealing to OT passages are employing typology or some other non-literal approach to the OT text that is not construing it as predicting the NT event. Probably it is best to allow for the possibility of both kinds of uses of the OT and examine each NT use of the OT on a

case-by-case basis. So, for example, one may understand Matthew's quotation of Micah 5:2 concerning the birthplace of Christ (Matt. 2:6) as a literal prediction but his quotation of Hosea 11:1 concerning God's "son" being called out of Egypt (Matt. 2:15), which in Hosea refers to the nation of Israel, as typological. Whether the NT text interprets an OT text as directly predictive of Christ or as typologically fulfilled in Christ, its use of the OT respects the integrity of the OT texts in their contexts. This is the view taken by a number of evangelicals noted for their work in this area (e.g., Darrell Bock in Berding and Lunde 2008; Craig L. Blomberg in Blomberg 2007b; G. K. Beale in many works such as Beale 2012).

4.6 Onomastics

One of the most recent disciplines to interface with biblical studies is *onomastics*, the study of proper names (also called onomatology). Human beings have of course been studying proper names for many centuries. However, the accumulation of ancient artefacts with writing through two centuries or so of archaeological exploration as well as advances in computer technology have made it possible for scholars to begin making useful generalizations about names in literate ancient cultures. Oxford University hosts a Lexicon of Greek Personal Names that provides a database of 35,000 Greek names documented from the eighth century BC through about the fifth century AD (Catling, Corsten, Chiricat, and Balzat 2007). Advances in onomastics make it possible to place the names occurring in a book such as the Gospel of Matthew into a specific historical and cultural context. They also raise the possibility of assessing the historical and cultural origins of the names occurring in the Book of Mormon, an issue that will be addressed briefly in chapter 6.

The study of ancient Jewish names was advanced considerably by the discovery and study during the twentieth century of over two hundred ancient ossuaries, or bone boxes, in the Jerusalem area containing inscriptions of the deceased and their relatives (catalogued in Rahmani 1994). The most comprehensive source of information on ancient Jewish names is Tal Ilan's 2002 *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*, which covered names of people living in Palestine between 330 BC (when Alexander the Great invaded the region) and AD 200. Ilan lists, by her count, 2,826 persons (2,509 males, 317 females) including 712 persons (519 males, 193 females) named on ossuaries (Ilan 2002, 43, 57). Judging

from these numbers, scholars are heavily dependent on ossuaries for their knowledge of women's names during that period.

Richard Bauckham analysed the data from Ilan's *Lexicon* and compiled his own tables of the most popular male and female names during that five-hundred-year period. Whereas Ilan counted persons, Bauckham counted occurrences of names, so that, if a person was known by two names (e.g., John Mark), both names are counted in Bauckham's system (Bauckham 2006, 69). Bauckham also excluded names that are statistically invalid for various reasons (69-70). Bauckham's approach generated a list of 2,953 occurrences of names—2,625 occurrences of male names, and 328 occurrences of female names (85-89).

When using Ilan and Bauckham's statistics, one should take into account that they cover a period of half a millennium. Certain names became enormously popular after the Maccabean revolt against the Greeks (167-165 BC), specifically, names belonging to the Hasmonean family that led the revolt and that established Jewish independence for over a century before the Roman Empire took over. This means that Jews were much more likely to give their children those names after about 165 BC than before. Hasmonean family names included *Simon*, *Mattathias* (or Matthew), *Johanan* (John), *Judah*, *Eleazar* (Lazarus), *Jonathan*, and possibly *Joseph* (see Ilan 2002, 7; Bauckham 2006, 75-76), as well as *Mariam* (Mary) and *Salome.* After the Romans' crushing defeat of Bar Kokhba in AD 135, when all Jewish hopes of independence ended, Jews were *less* likely to give their children Hasmonean names. The name Jesus (*Yeshua* or *Yehoshua*) also appears to have been more popular after 165 BC, perhaps because the *Yehoshua* of the Bible (Joshua) led the Jews' original conquest of the land.

The available information as analysed by both Ilan and Bauckham demonstrates that the names that appear in the Gospel of Matthew (as well as the other canonical Gospels) comport extremely well with its historicity. Table 4 lists some of the common Jewish names in ancient Palestine (in both Judea and Galilee) and gives statistics pertaining to their relative frequency. Since the results are basically the same for both Ilan and Bauckham, for sake of simplicity only Bauckham's statistics are given here (for Ilan's numbers, see Ilan 2002, 55-57; for Bauckham's, see Bauckham 2006, 85-89). What this analysis shows is that most of the prominent names in the Gospels—Joseph, Mary, Jesus, Simon, Judas, and

James—were extremely common in that culture, in that time and place. In fact, all but three of the proper names attributed to Jewish men in the Gospel of Matthew were among the eighty most common names for Jewish men in Palestine. As for the name Mary, it turns out to have been far and away the most popular name for Jewish females. These names would have been especially popular in the first century BC and the first century AD because of their associations with the Hasmoneans, as explained above.

Table 4. Occurrences and Frequencies of Jewish Names in Matthew		
	Total Number (Bauckham)	Per Cent Male or Female
All Male Names	**2625**	
1. Simon (*Simeon*)	243	9
2. Joseph (*Yosef*)	218	8
4. Judas (*Yudah, Judah*)	164	6
5. John (*Yohanan*)	122	4½
6. Jesus (*Yeshua*)	99	4
9. Matthew (*Mattathias*)	62	2
11. James (*Yacob*)	40	1.5
21. Barabbas	21	1
24. Herod	14	.5
39. Thaddeus	8	.3
50. Bartholomew (*son of Ptolemy*)	7	.27
61. Alphaeus (*Halfai*)	6	.23
61. Philip	6	.23
68. Zebedee (*Zebediah*)	5	.15
80. Archelaus	4	.15
80. Jonah (*Yonah*)	4	.15
80. Peter (*Petrus*)	4	.15
---. Andrew	3	.1
---. Thomas	2	<.1
---. Caiaphas	1	<.1
All Female Names	**328**	
1. Mary (*Mariam*)	70	21
13. Herodias	4	1

This statistical information not only shows that the proper names in Matthew's Gospel were authentic Jewish names at that time and place, it also explains why certain names appear more than once. Given the background information that Simon was the most popular man's name and Mary the most popular woman's name, it is now perfectly understandable that five of the men in Matthew were

named *Simon* (Matt. 4:18, etc.; 10:4; 13:55; 26:6; 27:32) and that three of the four women named in the Gospel are called *Mary* (1:16-20, etc.; 27:56, 61; 28:1).

While some of the common first-century Jewish names could be guessed from Old Testament names (Joshua, Joseph, Judah, Jacob, and Miriam), some of them could not (e.g., Simon, Matthew). A Hellenistic author in the late first century would not have been able to guess at the right names to use or which names might be used for several individuals. On the other hand, among the names are just a few of non-Semitic origin, such as Philip and Bartholomew, consistent with the Hellenistic cultural context of that time and place. Thus, the names that appear in the Gospel of Matthew are strong evidence for the historicity of those individuals.

4.7 Genre

A fundamental issue in the interpretation of any text is the question of its genre, or literary type. The genre of the Gospel of Matthew will be addressed here, and the genre of the SM in the next chapter. Likewise, the issue of the genre of the Book of Mormon will be addressed in chapter 6.

After a great deal of misdirection concerning the genre of the Gospels during most of the twentieth century, there is now significant recognition among NT scholars that the Gospels largely match the characteristics of ancient Greco-Roman biographies (*bioi*). Dirk Frickenschmidt (1997) argued that *bioi* followed a fairly standard three-part structure. The introduction might cover his birth, genealogy, naming, first test of character, and first public appearance. His deeds and sayings, presented either in thematic or chronological order, were the focus of the body of the biography. The work would conclude with a narrative of the subject's death and vindication, which might include prophecies, betrayals, arrests, legal proceedings, farewell speeches, the figure's death, and even post-mortem experiences (see the useful summary of Frickenschmidt's argument in Freyne 2004a, 8-10).

Richard Burridge's book *What Are the Gospels?* (originally published in 1992) thoroughly refuted the fallacy that because the Gospels do not conform to the usual elements of modern Western biographies they are not really interested in the life of Jesus (Burridge 2004; see also Burridge 2008). Burridge compared the Gospels to such ancient biographies as Philo's *On the Life of Moses*, Tacitus's *On the Life and Character of Julius Agricola*, Suetonius's *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, and

Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* (especially on Agesilaus and Cato), all of which were written within about sixty years of the Gospels (before or after). These Greco-Roman biographies were prose narratives typically running between about 10,000 to 30,000 words in length (Matthew is about 18,000 words long). They are loosely chronological accounts focusing on one person and demonstrating his admirable character through recounting his deeds and words. Such biographies sometimes began with the subject's birth or youth (as Matthew and Luke do), though in many instances they began with the commencement of his career or public service (as Mark and John do), and usually ended with his death. Unlike modern biographies, little attention was usually given to the subject's childhood, and the authors made no attempt to probe the psychological makeup of the subject. Furthermore, disproportionate attention might be given to a short period of the subject's life, as when Plutarch devotes over a third of his life of Agesilaus to the Persian campaign. This means that the sizable portions of the Gospels focusing on the last week of Jesus' life are consistent with the conventions of ancient Greco-Roman biographies. Such works were meant to preserve factual memories about the subject, to inform and educate readers about the subject's contributions, to draw lessons about moral character, and to defend a revered teacher's movement and legacy. In all these ways, the NT Gospels, including Matthew, exhibit standard conventional features of the *bioi*.

Burridge's demonstration that the Gospels were of the same type of writing as classical Greco-Roman biographies does not settle all questions about the nature of the Gospels. In particular, one must keep in mind the uniqueness of the Gospels' subject and the Jewish religious and cultural perspective of their authors. Craig Keener concludes that, "while adapting the genre of the hellenistic *bios*, of 'life,' the Gospel writers developed a style steeped in Old Testament historiography" (Keener 2009a, 22). Nevertheless, Burridge correctly argued that the Gospels should be read not as "by committees, about concepts, for communities" but rather "by a person, about a person, for other persons" (Burridge 2004, 295; see also Burridge 1998).

Several recent leading commentators on Matthew have specifically endorsed Burridge's identification of the Gospel as a Greco-Roman biography (e.g., Witherington 2006, 11; Keener 2009a, viii, 16-24; Keener 2009b, 73-84; Carson 2010, 63; Osborne 2010, 30-31; see also Allison 2005, 142-55, where Allison

explained why Burridge's study changed his view of the matter). One noted commentator who disagreed was Ulrich Luz. He acknowledged that "the most widespread view today is that the Gospel of Matthew is a *biography*" and even that this is how most of Matthew's readers understood it (Luz 2007, 14-15). Luz claimed, however, that not everyone understood Matthew as a biography, since Justin and Clement of Alexandria referred to Matthew as "remembrances" (13, 15 n. 80). This is an odd objection, since as Luz noted the term was not associated with a specific genre (13).

Luz offered two more objections to identifying Matthew as biography. First, he pointed out that "Matthew relates not the typical story of an exemplary man but the completely unique story of God with the man Jesus" (14). This observation serves to differentiate Matthew from Greco-Roman biographies with regard to didactic intent (the message or lessons that the biography conveys) but not genre. Second, he contended that the author of Matthew would probably not have been familiar with the Hellenistic genre of *bioi* ("lives," biographies), a claim that would seem ultimately to be question-begging. Luz concludes that the Gospel is best classified as a "foundation story" such as one finds in Chronicles or the Book of Jubilees (15). One point that Luz's discussion overlooked is that if Matthew "took the Gospel of Mark as his basic text" (15), he may have taken over the biography genre from Mark, whom most scholars think was quite familiar with Hellenistic literature.

4.8 Structure

One of the crucial issues in assessing the relationship of the SM in Matthew to the ST in the Book of Mormon is whether the contents, arrangement, and structure of the SM as it appears in Matthew were entirely the work of Jesus himself or were due in some part to the literary work of the author. The question is crucial because any literary elements originating with Matthew's composition would be expected to be absent from the ST as it appears in the Book of Mormon if the ST were a translation of an ancient sermon preached by Jesus to the Nephites. Since the issue of the structure of the SM is at least potentially related to the issue of the structure of the Gospel of Matthew as a whole, the Gospel's structure must be given some consideration.

All exegetes agree that the Gospel of Matthew, like the other canonical Gospels, follows a roughly (not precisely) chronological outline. The biographical purpose of the Gospel dictated its narrative flow from the birth and infancy of Jesus through his baptism by John, John's later arrest and execution, Jesus' heightening conflicts with Jewish leaders, and his going to Jerusalem for the Passover, climaxing with his arrest, trials, execution, burial, and resurrection. Within this essential chronological order the four Gospels structure and arrange their narrations of specific events and their records of Jesus' teachings in varying ways.

There are three major views on the structure of Matthew. Some scholars analyse Matthew based largely on its narrative parallel to the Gospel of Mark, usually organized according to the geographical movement of the narrative from Galilee to Jerusalem. With some qualifications, this is the approach favoured by Luz (2007, 2-10) and France (2007, 3-5). In a sense, this approach eschews any attempt to discern a rhetorical structure or literary plan to the Gospel beyond its general presentation along chronological and geographical lines.

The second approach of note favours a three-part analysis that divides the Gospel into a beginning (1:1-4:16), middle (4:17-16:20), and end (16:21-28:20). According to this view, the expression "from then Jesus began" (*apo tote ērxato ho 'Iēsous*, 4:17; 16:21) marks the transitions from one section to the next (notably Kingsbury 1975, 7-25; Gibbs 2006, 39-47). However, as France commented, "a phrase which occurs only twice in the gospel seems a slender basis on which to construct a total framework for the narrative" (France 2007, 3). Witherington (2006, 14-15) suggested that one might see three divisions, since the expression *apo tote* occurs also in 26:16, though he did not follow up on this suggestion. The expression in 26:16 (the only other occurrence besides 4:17 and 16:21) can hardly mark a major transition in the narrative; it simply notes that Judas began at that juncture to begin looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

The third view analyses the Gospel into a series of alternating narratives and discourses, with the end of each of the five discourses (Matthew 5:3-7:27; 10:5-42; 13:3-53; 18:1-35; 23:1 [or 24:3]-25:46) marked by the expression "and it happened when Jesus had finished" (*kai egeneto hote etelesen ho 'Iēsous*, 7:28-29; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Because it brings together the evidence of this distinctive expression with a clear textual pattern, this view has by far the strongest argument

(see especially Allison 2005, 135-42; Turner 2008, 8-10). The expression *kai egeneto hote* ("and it happened when") occurs in the NT only in these five transitional texts in Matthew; it also appears 14 times in the LXX. One advantage to this view is that it accounts better for chapters 26-28 functioning, as France admitted, as a separate section even though they are set in the same geographical location as chapters 21-25 (cf. France 2007, 4). The alternating narrative-discourse view also is more revealing of Matthew's distinct approach than the view that accommodates Matthew's structure to Mark's.

The chief difficulty with the five-discourse analysis as it is often developed is that it excludes Matthew 23 from the discourses, a difficulty that Witherington argued cannot be overcome by combining it with chapters 24-25 (Witherington 2006, 15-16). While most commentaries and studies on Matthew treat Matthew 24-25 as a discourse separate from chapter 23, some good arguments have been developed for regarding the three chapters as a single discourse (Blomberg 1992, 23-27; Hood 2009). One objection to this view is that in the discourse in chapter 23 Jesus speaks to the crowds as well as the disciples, while in the discourse in chapters 24-25 Jesus speaks to the disciples alone (Matt. 23:1; 24:1-3). However, a similar pattern occurs in two of the other discourse passages. In Matthew 13:1-53, which everyone agrees functions in Matthew as a single discourse, Jesus first delivers the parables to the crowds (13:1-9, 24-35), and then in response to the disciples' questions explains the parables to them privately (13:10-23, 36-52). In Matthew 18, Jesus first speaks to his disciples in public, since there are children present (18:1-20), and then speaks more privately in response to a question from Peter (18:21-35). Likewise, in Matthew 23-25 Jesus pronounces woes on the scribes and Pharisees and warns of impending judgment on Jerusalem, a warning he expresses more pointedly to the disciples privately (23:1-24:2); then in response to the disciples' question as to when this judgment would come, Jesus speaks to them privately about that coming judgment and its aftermath (24:3-25:46). Interpreting Matthew 23-25 as a discourse unit thus has the advantage of taking full recognition of the thematic connection between chapter 23 and chapters 24-25.

Witherington (2006, 15-16) also pointed out that the material in chapters 24-25 are set in a conversation outside the temple, whereas the material in chapter 23 takes place within the temple precincts (cf. Kingsbury 1975, 4-5). However, this

change in location is part of the way the discourse fits into the narrative: Jesus has pronounced woes on Jerusalem and its temple, and then from just outside the temple elaborates to his disciples on that coming judgment.

Table 5. Distinctive Motifs in the First and Last Discourses in Matthew		
Motifs	*Matthew 5-7*	*Matthew 23-25*
Series of blessings (5-7) or woes (23-25)	5:3-11	23:13-29
Persecution of the prophets	5:12	23:29-37
Heaven and earth pass away	5:18	24:35
Scribes and Pharisees	5:20	23:2, 13
Swearing by God's throne	5:33-37	23:16-22
Doing to be seen by others	6:1-2	23:5-7
Hypocrites	6:2, 5, 16	23:13-15
False prophets	7:15	24:11, 14
Lord, Lord…I do not know you	7:21-23	25:11-12

The five-discourse analysis of the Gospel of Matthew gains further support from a comparison of the first and fifth discourses (see Table 5). Only in these two discourses, for example, does Jesus refer to "the scribes and Pharisees." Only in these two discourses does Jesus criticize performing religious activities to be seen by others or warn about false prophets. The first discourse is marked by a series of blessings and the last discourse by a series of woes. Both discourses feature an extended criticism of the same kinds of oath-taking practices. In both discourses the unfaithful say *kurie kurie* ("Lord, Lord") and the Lord responds, "I never knew you" (7:21-23) or "I do not know you" (25:11-12). The fact that these and other distinctive discourse parallels to the SM are found in chapter 23 as well as in chapters 24-25 confirms that Matthew 23-25 functions as a whole discourse and that the Gospel has been deliberately composed to produce the five discourses (see further Hood 2009, 540-42).

Luz observed that the discourses in Matthew are arranged symmetrically by length: Matthew 5-7 and 24-25 are the longest, Matthew 10 and 18 are the shortest and similar in length, and Matthew 13 is of medium length compared to the other four (Luz 2007, 5; also Burridge 2007, 203). This observation would seem to support the view that Matthew has grouped the sayings of Jesus into these five discourses, although Luz admitted that the symmetry *may* be accidental (5 n. 19). The pattern Luz identified holds and is even slightly more consistent if one includes chapter 23

with the fifth discourse passage. The following are the word counts for the five discourse passages in Greek:

1. Matthew 5:1-7:27   1,982 words
2. Matthew 10:5-42   649 words
3. Matthew 13:3-52   936 words
4. Matthew 18:1-35   670 words
5. Matthew 23:1-25:46   2,232 words

Since the fourth discourse is slightly longer than the second, one would expect the fifth, final discourse to be somewhat longer than the first, which it is if one includes chapter 23. In either case, the general symmetry that Luz noticed holds up.

Table 6. Structure of the Gospel of Matthew	
Narratives	*Discourses*
1-4: Birth and Beginnings	
	5-7: Instruction: Righteousness of the Kingdom
8-9: Miracles	
	10: Commission: Preaching the Kingdom
11-12: Controversies	
	13:1-52: Parables: Analogies of the Kingdom
13:53-17:27: Testing and Transfiguration	
	18: Warning: Treating Others in the Kingdom
19-22: Jesus in Judea	
	23-25: Prophecy: Judgment of the Kingdom
26-28: Death and Resurrection	

As noted above, the narrative blocks appear to follow a general chronological order, although there is some grouping of similar stories together. The second narrative block consists mostly of miracle accounts, though the call of Matthew and a discussion of fasting come in the middle (9:9-17). Also, not all miracle stories fall in this narrative block: the feedings of the 5,000 and the 4,000, the healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter, and the miracle of the coin in the fish appear in a later narrative block (14:13-36; 15:21-39; 17:24-27). Similar material can also occur in both narrative and discourse blocks. For example, the centre discourse consists of nothing but parables (13:1-52), yet parables can be found in a later discourse block

(18:10-14, 23-35) and in a narrative block (21:28-22:14). Thus, one must not overstate the extent to which Matthew arranged material by genres. Nevertheless, the evidence does show that the general chronological arrangement of the narrative material has been adapted to allow for the collecting of didactic material in the five discourses, each of which has clearly identifiable themes (see Table 6).

While the "pentateuchal" or five-part analysis appears to represent the structure of the Gospel as a whole better than a tripartite analysis, there is no doubt that Matthew frequently arranges material in smaller units in threes. Dale Allison has given notable attention to this phenomenon in Matthew (Allison 1997, 70-71; Allison 2005, 202-205). Some of the triads or tripartite elements in the Gospel are not original to Matthew, such as the three temptations of Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11; cf. Luke 4:1-14). However, as Allison pointed out, many of them do appear to be the result of Matthew's literary arrangement or his "redaction" of earlier material.

Table 7 lists a number of such triads that are unique to Matthew's Gospel. In some instances the passages are unique to Matthew, while in other instances the passages have parallels in Mark or Luke, or both, yet only Matthew has the triadic element. For example, note the following two passages:

- "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. <u>And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him</u>. And after three days he will rise." (Mark 10:34)
- "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles <u>to be mocked and flogged and crucified</u>, and he will be raised on the third day" (Matt. 20:18-19).
- In both Mark and Luke, the Great Commandment is quoted with four terms for aspects of a human being (heart, soul, mind, and strength, Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27), whereas in Matthew "strength" is omitted (Matt. 22:37). If there were just a few of these triads distinctive to Matthew one could plausibly regard the phenomena as accidental or explain them in some other way, but there are so many that they appear to be deliberate literary devices. As will be shown in the next chapter, triadic elements and structures are especially prominent in the SM (§5.4).

Table 7. Triads in Matthew (Excluding the Sermon on the Mount)			
Title: Three names (1:1)	Jesus	David	Abraham
Genealogy: Three main names (1:2-16)	Abraham to David (1:2-6a)	David to Babylon (1:6b-11)	Babylon to Jesus (1:12-16)
Genealogy summarized (1:17)	Abraham to David	David to Babylon	Babylon to Jesus
Three infancy stories (1:18-2:23)	Birth of Jesus (1:18-25)	The Magi (2:1-12)	Escape from Herod (2:13-23)
Three gifts (2:11)	Gold	Frankincense	Myrrh
John's baptism (3:1-17)	Baptizing the people (3:1-6)	Not baptizing the Pharisees (3:7-12)	Baptizing Jesus (3:13-17)
God well-pleased with Jesus	Voice at Jesus' baptism (3:17)	Word of God in Scripture (12:18)	Voice at Jesus' transfiguration (17:5)
Three ministry activities of Jesus (4:23)	Teaching	Preaching	Healing
Three healings followed by a summary (8:1-17)	Leper (8:1-4)	Centurion's boy (8:5-13)	Peter's mother-in-law (8:14-15)
Three fear-producing miracles (8:23-9:8)	Stilling the storm (8:23-27; disciples afraid, v. 26)	Casting out the demons into the swine (8:28-34; city begs Jesus to leave, v. 34)	Healing the paralytic (9:1-8; crowds were afraid, v. 8)
Three healings and a summary (9:18-38)	A dead girl and a bleeding woman (9:18-26; news spread, v. 26)	Two blind men (9:27-31; news spread, v. 31)	Demoniac freed from demon (9:32-34; summary, vv. 35-38)
Three groupings of Messianic works (11:5)	Blind see and lame walk	Lepers cleansed and deaf hear	Dead are raised up and poor hear the gospel
Greater than three things (12:6, 41, 42)	Greater than the temple (12:6)	Greater than Jonah (12:41)	Greater than Solomon (12:42)
Three parables of growth (13:24-33)	Parable of the wheat seed (13:24-30)	Parable of the mustard seed (13:31-32)	Parable of the leaven (13:33)
Three parables of the kingdom (13:44-50)	The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field (13:44)	The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls (13:45-46)	The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea (13:47-50)

Three appeals to the Lord (15:21-28)	Have mercy on me, Lord (15:22)	Lord, help me (15:25)	Yes, Lord, but even the dogs get to eat (15:27)
Three reasons to take up the cross (16:24-27)	Because whoever wants to save his life will lose it (16:25)	Because nothing is worth the loss of one's soul (16:26)	Because the Son of Man will repay all according to their deeds (16:27)
Three steps of discipline (18:15-18)	One on one (18:15)	Two or three (18:16)	The whole church (18:17-18)
Three judgment parables (21:28-22:14)	The son who didn't obey (21:28-32)	The servants who killed the owner's son (21:33-45)	The wedding guest who was thrown out (22:1-14)
Threefold love of God (22:37)	All your heart	All your soul	All your mind
Whoever swears… (23:20-22)	By the altar (23:20)	By the temple (23:21)	By heaven (23:22)
Lighter and weightier matters of Torah (23:23)	Mint Justice	Dill Mercy	Cummin Faithfulness
Three groups of messengers (23:34)	Prophets	Wise men	Scribes
Three women (27:55-56)	Mary Magdalene	Mary the mother of James and Joseph	Mother of the sons of Zebedee
Baptism: Three names (28:19)	Father	Son	Holy Spirit

4.9 Sources: The Synoptic Problem

A crucial issue of direct relevance to the authenticity of the ST in the Book of Mormon as a sermon Jesus preached to the Nephites concerns Matthew's source or sources for the SM and his handling of that source material. This issue requires a consideration of the infamous *Synoptic Problem*—the question of the literary relationships if any among the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).

4.9.1   The Synoptic Problem and the Sermon at the Temple

The importance of this question for the present study may be explained simply enough. On the dominant view of the origins of the Synoptic Gospels, the first of the three Gospels to be written was Mark (a view commonly dubbed *Markan*

priority). Both Matthew and Luke, according to Markan priority, copied much of their Gospels from Mark. That is, for most if not all of the material in Matthew or Luke that is paralleled in Mark, the Markan priority hypothesis maintains that Matthew and Luke derived that parallel material from Mark. Parallel materials that are found in both Matthew and Luke but *not* in Mark are thought, again according to the dominant view, to have derived from an earlier source that both Matthew and Luke used independently of one another. This common, earlier source is known in Gospel scholarship as *Q* (probably based on the German word for "source," *Quelle*). The differences between Matthew and Luke in their wording and placement of the Q source material are explained as reflecting the authorial choices of the two Gospel authors. The theory that accepts both Markan priority and Q is commonly known as the two-source or two-document view.

If the two-document theory is correct, then the specific arrangement and wording of the sayings in the SM reflects specific authorial or editorial choices on the part of the author of the Gospel of Matthew. This would mean that while Jesus said (or for more liberal scholars may have said) the things attributed to him in the SM, he did not say them in the order and with the precise wording found in Matthew. This would be a problem for a traditional LDS view of the ST because that sermon as it appears in the Book of Mormon closely follows the order and wording of the Matthean SM. John Welch acknowledged the problem: "The presence of this material in the Sermon at the Temple, however, commits the believing Latter-day Saint to doubt such a claim. It seems unlikely for a person to believe that the resurrected Jesus delivered the sermon to the Nephites recorded in 3 Nephi 11-18 within a year after his crucifixion and at the same time to hold that the evangelist gave the Sermon its basic form and selected its content" (Welch 1999, 213).

Although the two-document theory has been the dominant view of the Synoptic Problem for nearly a century, it has always had its detractors and is far from the only viable solution. In fact, the two-document theory has come under heavy assault from a minority of scholars especially since the 1980s. It may be significant, however, that these dissenters have proposed a bewildering array of alternative views. That is, in the field of Synoptic studies there is the dominant two-document theory and then there are all of the other theories, none of which commands widespread assent.

The number of theoretical options is so large and the issues are so complex that it will not be possible here to offer even a thorough review of the Synoptic Problem, let alone present a fully developed argument for any conclusion. What can be done is to provide enough information and analysis of the problem so as to assess its relevance to the question of the historical authenticity of the ST in the Book of Mormon.

4.9.2   The Case against Literary Independence of the Synoptic Gospels

One alternative to the two-document theory that is actually popular with many evangelicals (though not held by most evangelical NT scholars) is the *independence theory*, the view that there is no literary relationship among the Synoptic Gospels and therefore no "Synoptic Problem" at all. According to this view, Matthew was an eyewitness who took notes that became the basis for his Gospel, Mark's Gospel was based on Peter's preaching, and Luke's Gospel was composed using the oral accounts of many different eyewitnesses. Advocates of this view include Robert L. Thomas and David Farnell, both of The Master's Seminary (see Thomas and Farnell 1998; Farnell 2002; R. Thomas 2004-2005), and Eta Linnemann, a former Bultmannian scholar (Linnemann 1992). A variant form of this view is that of John Rist, for whom Luke's Gospel did make use of the Gospel of Mark (Rist 1979).

The main argument for the independence view comes from external evidence, that is, from early Christian traditions concerning the origins of the Gospels. Those traditions are often if not usually understood to mean that Matthew wrote the Gospel that bears his name. According to the independence view, the belief that Matthew was an apostle and an eyewitness of many of the events he records is incompatible with the idea that he copied much of his Gospel from Mark, who was not an apostle. (In turn, most scholars who accept Markan priority do conclude on that basis that it is unlikely that the apostle Matthew was the author of the Gospel that bears his name.) Likewise, advocates of the independence view argue that Matthew would not have needed to depend on an earlier written source such as the hypothetical Q. They discount arguments for a literary relationship among the Synoptic Gospels by pointing out the many differences among them, including substantial verbal differences. Most advocates of literary independence,

again basing their argument largely on early church tradition, maintain that Matthew was the first Gospel written, a position known as *Matthean priority*.

These arguments for literary independence and Matthean priority lean heavily on the extant statements of the early church fathers. One problem in this regard is that the arguments end up making selective use of the patristic traditions about Gospel origins. For example, those same traditions typically say that the first Gospel was composed by Matthew in Hebrew, which means that they were not referring to the Greek Gospel of Matthew (see above, §4.3.2). As for the order of the Gospels, there does not seem to have been a uniform church tradition. Papias described Mark's Gospel before Matthew's, perhaps implying that Mark was first, but does not actually say which was written first; Clement of Alexandria asserted that the order was Matthew-Luke-Mark; Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine thought the order was Matthew-Mark-Luke (Bock 2001b, 44-46). There is certainly room to doubt that Matthean priority, an idea that can be traced back only to the third century, is a reliable tradition about the Greek Gospel of Matthew.

The argument that the apostle Matthew, if he were the author of the Gospel that bears his name, would not have used the Gospel of Mark (by a non-apostle) but would have relied on his own eyewitness testimony, is also answerable. Assuming apostolic authorship of the Gospel of Matthew, it is plausible that a less prominent apostle would develop his account around the Gospel that was based on the preaching of Peter, the most prominent of the apostles. Thus one should consider separately the issues of the sources and the authorship of the Gospel of Matthew.

While Gospel scholars differ among themselves as to how to view the interrelationships of the Synoptic Gospels, there is a virtual consensus that some sort of literary dependence is at least partially responsible for their similarities. Three considerations weigh heavily in favour of this conclusion.

First, the amount of material that the Synoptic Gospels, especially Matthew and Mark, have substantially in common is much greater than one would expect if the independence view were correct. Unfortunately, figures or statistics given in this regard differ markedly from one another because of different methods of counting. At the high end, Robert Stein, an advocate of Markan priority, stated that 97.2% of Mark's words are paralleled in Matthew and 88.4% of Mark's words are paralleled in Luke (Stein 2001, 52). However, these figures are actually comparing whole

passages regardless of the verbal differences within each passage, which are often considerable. Stein made this explicit and stated that 40% of Mark's words are identical to words in Matthew and 26% of Mark's words are identical to words in Luke (Stein 2001, 127). At the low end, Eta Linnemann, defending the literary independence view, presented numbers that emphasized how much of Matthew and Luke are not found in Mark; she said that "only" about 55% of Matthew's material and about 43% of Luke's material are paralleled in Mark (Linnemann 1992, 77-81). However, a careful perusal of her own statistics shows that by her count some 87% of Mark is paralleled in Matthew and about 70% of Mark is paralleled in Luke (107).

Table 8. Notable Material in Mark Only	
Passage	**Mark**
Title: Gospel of Jesus Christ	1:1
Packed house in Capernaum	2:1-2
Jesus' family thinks he is crazy	3:20-21
Parable of the seed that became grain	4:26-29
Explanation of Jewish washing ritual	7:2-4
Deaf man healed: *Ephphatha*	7:32-36
Bethsaida blind man healed	8:22-26
Jesus questions the amazed crowd	9:15-16
Exchange with the demoniac's father	9:20b-25a
Worm doesn't die; salted with fire	9:48-49
Scribe affirms the right answer	12:32-34a
Young man runs away naked	14:51-52
Pilate surprised that Jesus was dead	15:44-45
13 units	*38 verses*

There are only four units or passages in Mark longer than two verses in length that are unique to that Gospel (see Table 8): the parable of the seed's growth to ripe grain (4:26-29), Jesus' healing of a deaf man by saying *Ephphatha* (7:32-36), Jesus'

healing of a blind man in Bethsaida (8:22-26), and Jesus' exchange with the father of the demonized boy (9:20-27). Most of the unique material in Mark is much shorter, such as the title (1:1), the report that Jesus' family thought he was crazy (3:20-21), and the story of the young man who ran away naked from Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested (14:51-52). Nearly everything else in Mark is found in Matthew. There are only three other whole pericopes in Mark not paralleled in Matthew but that are found in Luke (see Table 9): the casting out of an unclean spirit (Mark 1:23-27, cf. Luke 5:33-36), Christ's leaving Capernaum to minister in other towns (Mark 1:35-38, cf. Luke 5:42-43), and the widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44, cf. Luke 21:1-4). Luke and Mark also have more of the same details in the accounts of the Gerasene demoniac and the incidents of the woman and the young girl (Mark 5:1-20, 26-43, cf. Luke 8:26-56) than Matthew, whose version of the two pericopes is significantly shorter (Matt. 8:28-34; 9:18-31).

Table 9. Notable Material in Mark and Luke Only		
Passage	**Mark**	**Luke**
Unclean spirit in the synagogue	1:23-27	5:33-36
Jesus leaves town	1:35-38	5:42-43
Details on the Gerasene demoniac	5:3-4, 6, 8-10, 15-16, 18-20	8:27b, 28a, 29b-31, 35b-36, 37b-39
Details on the woman and the girl	5:26b, 29a, 30b, 32-33, 35-37, 43	8:43b, 44b, 45-47, 49-51, 55b-56
Not against you, for you	9:38-39a, 40	9:49-50
Widow's mite	12:41-44	21:1-4
Women found the tomb empty	16:4-5	24:2-5a
5 units and other material	*36 verses*	*32 verses*

Linnemann objected to literary dependence theories by reasoning that, "given the assumption of literary dependence, one would expect similarities of nearly 100 percent" (Linnemann 1992, 109). Such an expectation is unrealistic. If Matthew had, say, three main sources—Mark, Q, and Matthew's own distinctive information—the similarities of Matthew to Mark would necessarily be well below 100 per cent. The

fact that about half of Matthew consists of material with parallels in Mark argues for, not against, some sort of dependence, of whatever nature and direction it might be.

Table 10. Parallels between John and the Synoptic Gospels	
John	**Synoptics**
John's words about Jesus (John 1:23, 26-28, 32-33)	Matt. 3:3, 11, 17; Mark 1:3, 7, 10; Luke 3:4, 16, 21-22
Cleansing of the temple (John 2:13-16)	Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45
Healing of a man's boy from a distance (John 4:46-54)	Matt. 8:1-13; Luke 7:1-10
Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:1-14)	Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:33-44; Luke 9:12-17
Walking on the sea (John 6:16-21)	Matt. 14:22-27, 32-33; Mark 6:45-52
Mary anoints Jesus (John 12:1-8)	Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-9
Triumphal entry (John 12:12-15)	Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40
Predictions of Judas's betrayal and Peter's denials (John 13:21-30, 37-38)	Matt. 26:20-25, 33-35; Mark 14:18-21, 29-31; Luke 22:21-23, 33-34
Jesus' arrest in the Garden (John 18:1-11)	Matt. 26:47-52; Mark 14:43-47; Luke 22:47-51
Peter's three denials (John 18:15-18, 25-27)	Matt. 26:58, 69-75; Mark 14:54, 66-72; Luke 22:54-62
Pilate questions Jesus, releases Barabbas, and sentences Jesus (John 18:28-34, 39-40; 19:4-6, 13-16)	Matt. 27:11-18, 21-26; Mark 15:1-15; Luke 23:1-5, 16, 18-25
Jesus is crucified (John 19:17-19, 23-24, 28-30)	Matt. 27:33-38, 48, 50; Mark 15:22-27, 36-37; Luke 23:32-33, 34b, 36-38, 46
Jesus' burial (John 19:38-42)	Matt. 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-53
Mary Magdalene found the tomb empty, told the disciples (John 20:1-2)	Matt. 28:1, 8; Mark 16:1-2, 8; Luke 24:1-3, 9-10
Peter ran to the tomb and found it empty (John 20:3, 6)	Luke 24:12
Jesus appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem (John 20:19-20)	Luke 24:36-40
A miraculous catch of fish (John 21:1-11)	Luke 5:1-11

The extent of the similarities of contents of the three Synoptic Gospels is brought into clear relief when they are contrasted with the Gospel of John. The Fourth Gospel has the same subject (Jesus) and covers the same period (his public ministry, death, and resurrection), yet has very little specific material that parallels material in the Synoptics (see Table 10).

Only about 127 out of 879 verses of John, or about 14 per cent, have parallels in *any* of the Synoptic Gospels, and some of these parallels may not even be of the same events (e.g., the healings of a sick boy or the miraculous catches of fish). About 94 out of 662 verses in Mark, or about 14 per cent of that Gospel, are paralleled by material in John—roughly the same amount of material in Mark that is *not* paralleled in Matthew.

The second consideration supporting literary dependence among the Synoptic Gospels is the close verbal similarities of many of their parallel passages. The evidence here is both quantitative and qualitative. *Quantitatively*, there is a far higher degree of verbal similarities among many of the parallel passages than one would expect in the absence of any literary relationships among the Synoptics. *Qualitatively*, careful examination of many specific instances of such verbal similarities strongly confirms literary dependence.

An example that illustrates both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of this point is the quotation of Jesus' words when healed a paralyzed man (see Table 11). For these parallel verses, there are 35 words in common among all three accounts (Matt., 80%; Mark 69%; Luke, 78%), including 24 words that are the same forms and that appear in the same order exactly in all three Gospels (Matt., 55%; Mark, 47%; Luke, 53%). The percentages are higher if one compares just Matthew and Mark, which have 39 words in common, of which only one of which takes different forms (*egertheis* vs. *egeire*) and only one three-word sequence (*epi tēs gēs*) appears in a different place. Thus 80% of Matthew's words are identical to words in Mark both in form and in order. To look at the matter the other way around, 76% of Mark's words in the above passage also appear in Matthew, with 69% of the words in Mark's passage of identical form and in identical order in Matthew.

Table 11. Healing of the Paralytic		
Matthew 9:5-6	**Mark 2:9-11**	**Luke 5:23-24**
For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"— he then said to the paralytic— "Rise, pick up your bed and go home."	Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"— he said to the paralytic— "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home."	Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"— he said to the man who was paralyzed— "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home."
[5] τί γάρ ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν· ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν· ἔγειρε καὶ περιπάτει; [6] ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας- τότε λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ· ἐγερθεὶς ἆρόν σου τὴν κλίνην καὶ ὕπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου.	[9] τί ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν τῷ παραλυτικῷ· ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν· ἔγειρε καὶ ἆρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει; [10] ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας **ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς**- λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ· [11] σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε ἆρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ ὕπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου.	[23] τί ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν· **ἀφέωνταί** σοι αἱ ἁμαρτίαι **σου**, ἢ εἰπεῖν· ἔγειρε καὶ περιπάτει; [24] ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι **ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου** ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας- εἶπεν τῷ **παραλελυμένῳ·** σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε καὶ ἄρας τὸ κλινίδιόν σου πορεύου εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου.

It is true that in these passages most of the words are sayings attributed to Jesus, whose sayings his disciples are likely to have memorized. However, they are unlikely to have memorized them *in Greek*, and translations by different writers (or speakers) of Aramaic sayings into Greek are unlikely to have produced such similar results. In addition, the interruption of Jesus' words with the explanation "he said to the paralytic" in the same place by all three authors is difficult to explain as the result of people memorizing Jesus' sayings. Thus, both the number of words that are identical in such parallel passages and the specific nature of some of the verbal elements considered together seem best explained as the result of a literary relationship among the texts.

Another striking example of similar wording in parallel Gospel accounts comes in the recording of John the Baptist's warning of judgment. Here the parallel passages are found only in Matthew (3:7-10) and Luke (3:7-9). While the narrative words introducing the quotations are very different, the quotations are remarkably

similar (see Table 12). Matthew's quotation has 63 words, Luke's has just one more: the word *kai* ("and") in verse 9. Luke's version uses the plural "fruits in keeping" (*karpous axious*) instead of the singular "fruit in keeping" (*karpon axion*), and uses the verb *arxēsthe* ("begin") where Matthew has the verb *doxēte* ("presume"). Again, John presumably spoke in Aramaic, so the close verbal agreement in these two Greek texts is best explained as due to a literary relationship of some kind. Part of the reason why the verbal similarities between passages like these are such compelling evidence of a literary dependence is that Greek syntax is highly flexible, so that even if the authors had happened to use the same words it would not be likely that they would often present the words in the same order within their sentences. The fact that the introductory narrative words are so different probably means only that one or both authors took more liberty with their narratives than they did with John's sayings.

Table 12. John the Baptist's Warning of Judgment	
Matthew 3:7-10	**Luke 3:7-9**
<u>But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them</u>, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear <u>fruit</u> in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not <u>presume</u> to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."	<u>He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him</u>, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear <u>fruits</u> in keeping with repentance. And do not <u>begin</u> to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ⁹ Even now <u>also</u> the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."
<u>ἰδὼν δὲ πολλοὺς τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων ἐρχομένους ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς·</u> γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς; ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας καὶ μὴ <u>δόξητε</u> λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ. λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ. ἤδη δὲ ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ῥίζαν τῶν δένδρων κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται.	<u>Ἔλεγεν οὖν τοῖς ἐκπορευομένοις ὄχλοις βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ·</u> γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς; ποιήσατε οὖν καρπ<u>οὺς</u> ἀξί<u>ους</u> τῆς μετανοίας καὶ μὴ <u>ἄρξησθε</u> λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ. λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ. ἤδη δὲ <u>καὶ</u> ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ῥίζαν τῶν δένδρων κεῖται· πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται.

On these parallel texts in Matthew and Luke, Scot McKnight commented: "Various explanations of these empirically observable phenomena might be offered: Luke copied Matthew, or Matthew copied Luke, or each copied another source (Q), or God told both of them the same thing" (McKnight 2001, 77). While the fourth explanation is hypothetically possible, there are empirically observable phenomena that do not easily fit the explanation that God dictated the Greek words to Matthew and Luke, namely, that a few of the words are *not* identical. Furthermore, in other passages the verbal similarities are not as high as in this one. This fact makes the appeal to divine dictation *ad hoc* rather than a serious hypothesis that can explain the phenomena of the Synoptic Gospels. McKnight concluded, "We are reasonably confident that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are related at the literary level and that it is highly likely that they are mutually dependent, however one might see that relationship or set of relationships" (77).

Table 13. Peter's Rebuke of Jesus and Jesus' Response	
Matthew 16:22-23	**Mark 8:32b-33**
And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."	And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."
καὶ **προσλαβόμενος** αὐτὸν ὁ Πέτρος ἤρξατο ἐπιτιμᾶν αὐτῷ λέγων· Ἵλεώς σοι, κύριε· οὐ μὴ ἔσται σοι τοῦτο. ὁ δὲ **στραφεὶς** εἶπεν τῷ Πέτρῳ· ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ· σκάνδαλον εἶ ἐμοῦ, ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.	καὶ **προσλαβόμενος** ὁ Πέτρος αὐτὸν ἤρξατο ἐπιτιμᾶν αὐτῷ. ὁ δὲ **ἐπιστραφεὶς** καὶ ἰδὼν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἐπετίμησεν Πέτρῳ καὶ λέγει· ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ, ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

While in general the verbal similarities among the Synoptic Gospels are especially close in quotations of Jesus, John, and other figures, there are some striking similarities in narrative material that are best explained by the view that there is a literary relationship among the Gospels on the narrative level. One notable example comes in Matthew and Mark's narratives of Peter's rebuke of Jesus following Jesus' first prediction of his execution (for the example itself but not the

analysis that follows, cf. Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles 2009, 160). Matthew 16:22 and Mark 8:32 share an identical eight-word narrative sentence describing Peter's action (see Table 13). Notably, these parallel sentences contain the only occurrences of the verb *proslambanein* ("to take aside") in the Gospels (it also appears five times in Acts and five times in Paul). Matthew introduces Jesus' response to Peter by referring to Jesus with the unusual expression, "But the one turned" (*ho de strapheis*, an articular aorist passive participle). The verb *strephein* ("to turn") appears twenty times in the NT, but this is the only occurrence of the verb as an articular participle. Mark uses the more common form *epistrephein* ("to turn upon," a variant form of the same verb with the prefix *epi–*), which occurs 36 times in the NT (and over five hundred times in the LXX). This verb occurs in an articular participle form (active, not passive) just twice elsewhere in the NT (Acts 26:18; James 5:20). Some sort of literary relationship between Matthew and Mark is the best explanation for all these similarities taken together.

The third consideration that supports a literary relationship among the Synoptics is the similarity in the order in which their common material is presented. Here again, it is possible to explain much, but not all, of the relevant data in another way. One can certainly argue that much of the agreement in order is due to the fact that certain events in the narrative logically must fall in a particular order. Thus, it is no surprise when the Gospels report Jesus' baptism by John before the beginning of his ministry, or that their accounts of Jesus' passion follows the same basic outline of last supper, Gethsemane, arrest, trial, execution, and burial. It is also possible to explain some of the agreement in order as the result of people remembering accurately that certain events followed one another. The fact that John's Gospel agrees with Matthew and Luke in reporting Jesus walking on the sea immediately following his feeding of the five thousand (Matt. 14:13-32; Mark 6:30-52; John 6:1-21) is plausibly explained as the recollection of eyewitnesses.

Nevertheless, the agreements in order among the Synoptic Gospels, especially between Matthew and Mark, in important ways are indicative of a literary relationship. Since everyone agrees that the similarities in order in their passion narratives are not especially relevant in this regard, their material preceding Jesus' entry into Jerusalem will be considered here. Just five whole pericopes from Mark 1-10 are missing from Matthew (1:23-27; 1:35-38; 3:20-21; 7:32-36; 8:22-26).

Matthew's material always follows the same order as in Mark except for six pericopes in Matthew 8-10: the cleansing of the leper (Matt. 8:1-4), the calming of the storm (8:23-27), the Gadarene demoniacs (8:28-34), the miracles of the bleeding woman and the dying girl (9:18-26), the choosing of the twelve (10:1-4), and the sending out of the twelve (10:5-15). (Four of these six pericopes appear in Mark 4:35-6:13.) There are 21 pericopes in common in Matthew 14-20 and in Mark 6:14-10:52, and these 21 periciopes appear in the same order with no deviation in both Gospels. Indeed, the material in Matthew 14-20 includes all but one of the pericopes in Mark 6:14-10:52 (the healing of the blind man in Bethsaida, Mark 8:22-26).

This high degree of agreement in order probably cannot be explained entirely on the basis that the Gospel authors were simply narrating the events in chronological order. One reason this explanation is inadequate is simply that the Gospels do differ in order in a number of places, showing that there was no concerted effort to maintain a strict chronological account of all the events narrated. As already noted, Matthew and Mark do differ in the placement of six pericopes. Mark and Luke also differ in order in some places—and these are with different pericopes than in the case of Matthew and Mark. Thus, the fact that the Synoptic Gospels so often do agree in order of presentation suggests literary dependence of some kind. Another reason is that the common order sometimes is clearly not intended to be chronological. For example, both Matthew and Mark give an account of the execution of John the Baptist at the same place in their narratives as a "flashback" to explain why Herod Antipas thought Jesus might have been John risen from the dead (Matt. 14:1-2; Mark 6:14-16).

The three lines of evidence just considered—the amount of material the Synoptic Gospels share in common, the often remarkable verbal similarities in their parallel accounts, and the similarities in the order in which they present their material—cumulatively constitute an extremely strong case for a literary relationship among the Synoptic Gospels. Such a literary relationship strongly indicates the likelihood that Matthew's presentation of Jesus' teachings in the SM is due in some way to the sources he used—which in turn would raise the question of how the ST, appearing in a book that could not have had access to Matthew's sources, could end up being so similar to the SM. To address this question cogently it will be necessary to have some understanding of Matthew's sources and how he used them.

4.9.3   Matthew's Use of Mark

The conclusion of the argument just presented is that some sort of literary relationship exists among the Synoptic Gospels. This still leaves the question of what that relationship might be. Since the focus of this part of the present study is on Matthew, the crucial issue here is whether Matthew used either Mark or Luke and also whether Matthew used other sources.

Most views of the Synoptic problem that acknowledge literary relationships agree that the Gospel of Matthew is literarily dependent on at least Mark. The reasons for this conclusion have been rehearsed many times, are well known, and may be summarized briefly here (see, e.g., Davies and Allison 1998, 97-114; Stein 2001; McKnight 2001; Osborne and Williams 2002). The general observation made is that it is easier to explain why Matthew's Gospel would be written after Mark's than to explain why Mark's would be written after Matthew's. As has already been noted, Matthew includes material paralleling nearly all of Mark, making it rather difficult to understand why Mark would be written if Matthew was already available. On the other hand, only about half of Matthew's Gospel has parallels in Mark's, and it is easy enough to understand why someone would take the Gospel of Mark and expand it to twice the length by adding substantial material to it. Moreover, for the most part one can easily understand why Matthew would omit the material in Mark's Gospel that he lacks but not so easy to understand why Mark would omit the material in Matthew's that he lacks. For example, one can understand Matthew omitting the brief account of Jesus' family thinking that he was insane (Mark 3:20-21) out of deference to those family members who had since come to believe in Jesus. The omission of the story of the young man running away naked from Gethsemane (14:51-52) is understandable if the young man had grown up to become a leader in the church (indeed, he may very well have been Mark himself). It is easy to understand why Matthew would want to add an account of Jesus' virgin birth and infancy (Matt. 1-2) and the material known as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), but not easy to understand why Mark would omit *all* of that material.

Comparisons of Matthew and Mark on a more detailed level have found many reasons to think that Matthew is based on Mark rather than vice versa. For example, in general when the two Gospels contain parallel material Matthew's tends to be more concise. Matthew 8-16 has 25 pericopes that are substantially parallel to 25

pericopes in Mark (found mostly in Mark 1-8). Overall Matthew's versions of these pericopes tend to be longer than Mark's. Specifically, of the thirteen pericopes in common found in Matthew 8-12, only three are shorter in Mark than in Matthew (the sending of the twelve, Matt. 10:5-15; picking grain on the Sabbath, 12:1-8; blaspheming the Holy Spirit, 12:22-32); the other ten are shorter in Matthew than in Mark. Matthew's parable collection (13:1-52) is a major exception in that it is significantly longer than Mark's (4:1-34), but this is because it contains several parables not in Mark at all, including the parable of the tares and Jesus' lengthy explanation. The nine pericopes that run parallel in both Gospels beginning with the account of John's death comprise 1,350 words in Matthew (14:1-16:12) and 1,500 words in Mark (6:14-8:21). The same pattern holds true for the rest of the two Gospels: in their parallel pericopes, Matthew's are usually though not always shorter (cf. table in Stein 2001, 53-55).

The best explanation for the comparative brevity of most of Matthew's pericopes that parallel Mark's is that the former has eliminated much of the latter's verbiage and details to make room for the considerable amount of additional material in Matthew. Matthew also eliminates some elements from Mark's accounts that might have been difficult for Matthew's readers to understand, for a variety of reasons. One can see both kinds of editorial changes in Matthew and Mark's parallel accounts of the healing of a leper (see Table 14). Matthew's account lacks such evidently superfluous elements as "imploring him" and the words "sternly charged him and sent him away at once." It also lacks the phrase "moved with pity" (ESV), an omission that may be more significant than it seems at first glance. As mentioned earlier (§4.2.3), the more likely original reading for this phrase is actually "moved with *anger*" (Ehrman 2003; Wallace 2006, 340-42, who also cites Proctor 1999 in support), a comment that one can well understand Matthew being concerned his readers might not understand. Rather than including this element and stopping to explain why Jesus was angry, Matthew simply omits these words. This is a far more likely explanation than that Mark added the phrase "moved with anger" to an account such as Matthew's. The point here (as elsewhere) is not that there is anything amiss with what Mark wrote, but that Matthew may well have judged that for his purposes and in consideration of his readers these elements were a distraction not worth the effort to retain and explain.

Table 14. Healing of the Leper in Matthew and Mark	
Matthew 8:2-4	**Mark 1:40-44**
And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "<u>Lord</u>, if you will, you can make me clean." And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them."	And a leper came to him, <u>imploring him</u>, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." <u>Moved with pity</u>, he stretched out his hand and touched him <u>and</u> said <u>to him</u>, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy <u>left him, and he was made</u> clean. And Jesus <u>sternly charged him and sent him away at once, and</u> said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them."

The observation that Matthew's account tends to be more compact and to omit controversial or difficult to explain elements present in Mark's does not mean, of course, that Matthew never includes material not in Mark. In fact, some of Matthew's material unparalleled in Mark adds further weight to the view that Mark is the earlier work. In the above passage, Matthew reports that the leper addressed Jesus as "Lord" (*kurie*), a detail missing from Mark's account. Indeed, Matthew reports Jesus being addressed as *kurie* at least 22 times, but Mark only once (7:28). It is therefore far more likely that Matthew added this honorific address to the leper's words than that Mark chose to remove it.

Many other kinds of evidence have been cited in support of the view that Matthew's Gospel was dependent on Mark's. Some of this evidence is suggestive but not compelling. One category of evidence that is well known is the fact that in several parallel passages Mark gives an Aramaic expression that is missing from Matthew (Stein 2001, 59-63). These include the nickname *Boanerges* ("sons of thunder") Jesus gave to James and John (Mark 3:17; cf. Matt. 10:2), the term *Corban* ("given," Mark 7:11; cf. Matt. 15:5), Jesus' words to raise the little girl from death, *Talitha kumi* ("Little girl, arise," Mark 5:41; cf. Matt. 9:25), and *Abba* ("Father," Mark 14:36; cf. Matt. 26:39). Matthew also lacks the passage in Mark in which Jesus heals a deaf man by saying *Ephphatha* ("be opened," Mark 7:34). This argument may work by viewing these texts as further examples of Matthew's streamlining pericopes he found in Mark, but the evidence does not support the notion that

Matthew was concerned to eliminate all such Aramaic expressions. He does retain Jesus' cry in Aramaic on the cross, *Eli, eli, lama sabachthani* (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34), perhaps because those words were especially well known in the early church as Jesus' most poignant saying from the cross. There are also two words commonly identified as Aramaic terms that appear only in Matthew's Gospel (*raca*, Matt. 5:22; *mammon*, Matt. 6:24). Thus, one must be cautious in appealing to such evidence, although it does fit with the larger body of evidence indicating that Matthew was dependent on Mark.

The conclusion that Matthew and Luke, especially Matthew, were probably both dependent on Mark has much to commend it and is still the dominant view in Gospel scholarship. This conclusion is an important first step in addressing the question of Matthew's source or sources for the SM.

4.9.4   Source or Sources of Material Common to Matthew and Luke

As just explained, roughly half of the material in Matthew is paralleled in Mark and is evidently dependent on Mark. In addition to this material, much of which is also paralleled in Luke, about one-sixth of Matthew's material (about 200 verses in Matthew) is paralleled in Luke but *not* in Mark. This material common to Matthew and Luke but not Mark includes much (though not nearly all) of the material in the SM. As mentioned above (§4.9.1), the most common explanation for this material is that Matthew and Luke had access to an earlier source that by scholarly convention is called *Q*. Alternate explanations that acknowledge Markan priority are that Matthew and Luke drew on common oral traditions, that Luke made use of Matthew (perhaps instead or in addition to Mark) or, less commonly suggested, that Matthew made use of Luke in addition to Mark. For ease of reference the material common to Matthew and Luke but not in Mark will be called Q without prejudging the question of the source or sources of this material.

Some general observations about the Q material will put the matter in some context. None of it is found in the infancy narratives (Matt. 1-2; Luke 1-2) or passion narratives (Matt. 26-28; Luke 22-24). The Q material is found throughout most of the intervening chapters. Ignoring isolated units of just one or two verses, Q material may be found in Matthew chapters 3-12, 18, 21, 23-24, and in Luke chapters 3-4, 6-7, 9-13, 15-17, 20. Most of Q consists of teachings of Jesus and are especially

prominent in Matthew 5-7, 10-12, 23-24, and in Luke 6-7, 10-13. There are, however, a few pericopes besides those presenting Jesus' teachings: John the Baptist's warnings (Matt. 3:7-10; Luke 3:7-9), Jesus' three temptations in the wilderness (Matt. 4:2-10; Luke 4:2-12) and the healing of the centurion's boy (Matt. 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10). The fact that such pericopes are among the material common to Matthew and Luke but not Mark makes it more complicated to defend the hypothesis that the Q source was a collection of Jesus' sayings. It is of course possible that Matthew and Luke used such a sayings source but also happened to have access to similar versions of the other pericopes from one or more different sources.

The lack of simple or clearly defined parameters for the Q material evident in Matthew and Luke makes any speculation as to the full contents of a hypothetical Q source futile. Even if one infers that most or all of the material common only to Matthew and Luke probably derived from an earlier source, it is impossible to know what else might have been in such a source that Matthew and Luke happen not to have selected. It is also impossible to know what such a hypothetical source did *not* include; for example, one cannot validly infer from the extent of material paralleled only in Matthew and Luke that their hypothetical source contained no mention of Jesus' resurrection. (One may reasonably infer that if Q was a collection of Jesus' sayings then it likely did not contain *narratives* of that event.) Nor is it possible to reconstruct a pre-history of Q back to earlier versions, as Burton Mack famously did in order to press backward to a "Q[1]" in which Jesus made no divine or religiously exclusive claims for himself (Mack 1993). Such fanciful claims so overtly hostile to the Gospels' actual presentations of Jesus account for much of the scepticism and even cynicism with which many conservative evangelicals view Synoptic criticism. The proper stance, however, is to view such theories as abuses of legitimate inquiry into the sources and origins of the Synoptic Gospels (see the helpful comments in Blomberg 2001, 24-29, and in the same volume Bock 2001b, 56-60). One can actually use source criticism responsibly to show that the earliest strata of material in the Gospels attest to the orthodox view of Jesus (see, e.g., Meadors 1992).

As mentioned above, if one accepts Markan priority there are at least four ways of explaining the origins of the Q material in Matthew and Luke: both Gospels drew on similar oral traditions; Luke was dependent on Matthew; Matthew was

dependent on Luke; and both Gospels drew on the same source (usually understood as written).

The hypothesis that Matthew and Luke drew on similar oral traditions has some plausibility in that most of the Q material consists of sayings of Jesus. However, as pointed out in discussing the evidence for Markan priority, in many places the similarities *in Greek* between Matthew and Luke's parallel versions of the Q sayings of Jesus seem difficult to explain satisfactorily on the basis of oral traditions. On the other hand, a point in favour of the oral tradition view is that it explains very well why Matthew and Luke present the Q material in different orders and often in different contexts.

The view that Luke drew his Q material from Matthew is at present the chief rival to the theory of an earlier written source used by both Matthew and Luke. The view commonly called "Mark without Q" accepts Markan priority, according to which Mark was written first and Matthew and Luke knew and drew on Mark, but rejects the hypothetical Q source. Instead this alternative view theorizes that Luke used both Mark and Matthew (Farrer 1955; Goulder 1989; Goodacre 2002a, 2002b; Goodacre and Perrin 2004). This theory is similar to the two-Gospel theory (sometimes called the Griesbach hypothesis), which denies Markan priority and argues that Matthew was written first, that Luke drew on Matthew, and that Mark was based on both Matthew and Luke (Farmer 1976, 1994; Dungan 1992; Niemalä 2002).

While a thorough examination of the arguments for the views that make Luke dependent on Matthew is beyond the scope of this study, two of the principal reasons why most scholars remain unconvinced may be explained here.

First, it is extremely difficult to understand why Luke would break up Matthew's discourses, especially the Sermon on the Mount (SM), and place parts of those discourses in sometimes widely separated locations throughout his Gospel. For example, material paralleling parts of the SM (Matt. 5-7) are found scattered across ten chapters in Luke in two large units (Luke 6:20-49; 12:22-34) and at least seven small units (Luke 11:2-4, 9-13, 34-35; 12:41-42, 58-59; 16:13, 17-18).

Second, comparisons of Matthew and Luke in various places strongly suggest that Luke was produced independently of Matthew. The infancy narratives of the two Gospels are an especially significant case in point. One can find several points of agreement between the two narratives (Jesus' parents were named Joseph and

Mary; they lived in Nazareth yet Jesus was born in Bethlehem, etc.), yet the two accounts have no pericopes or even isolated statements in common. The two authors appear to have had entirely different sources for their accounts of Jesus' conception, birth, and infancy (cf. Bock 2001b, 47-48).

Matthean posteriority, the view that Matthew was the last Gospel written, has usually been given short shrift but in recent years has been given serious consideration (notably Huggins 1992; Blair 2003; Edwards 2009). It is easier to understand why Matthew would reorganize Jesus' sayings found in Luke into large blocks than to understand why Luke would break up Matthew's discourse blocks. Yet the evidence that Matthew and Luke wrote independently as seen, for instance, in the infancy narratives poses the same problem for Matthean posteriority as for the Mark-without-Q and Matthean priority views.

The remaining view that Matthew and Luke drew on a common written source most easily accounts for the verbal similarities between their parallel materials. If that common source was primarily a collection of Jesus' sayings, such a collection might have been loosely arranged, which would explain why Matthew and Luke so often place their parallel sayings in different places in the narrative.

In one crucial respect the written Q hypothesis has much the same effect as the oral tradition hypothesis. In both views, the two authors utilized much of the same material but arranged that material in different ways and made various verbal changes to express Jesus' teachings in terms that reflected the authors' thematic interests and perhaps their readers' knowledge and perspectives. This would mean that none of the Gospels constitutes the "original" Gospel from which the others are merely derivative.

If the dominant view of Synoptic origins is correct, much but not all of the material in the SM as it appears in Matthew derives from a source that was also used by Luke. Some of this material is presented more or less in the same context in both Gospels, but considerable material that is found together in the SM in Matthew is found scattered in various contexts of the narrative in Luke. This source analysis raises a potentially insuperable problem for the authenticity of the ST in the Book of Mormon, since it follows Matthew's arrangement of these parallel materials in every instance.

4.9.5   LDS Scholarship and the Synoptic Problem

With regard to the present study, the implications of the Synoptic problem for the authenticity of the Sermon at the Temple (ST) in the Book of Mormon, touched on briefly above, remain to be developed. In the next chapter, the matter of the composition of the SM itself will be considered in some detail. It will be appropriate at this point, however, to review and assess notable treatments of the Synoptic problem by LDS scholars.

John Welch, quoted at the beginning of this section's treatment of the Synoptic problem, pointed out that "not every proposed theory regarding the synoptic question is equally persuasive" (Welch 1999, 214). This statement is quite correct but leaves the question unanswered. In fact, in the same book Welch did not express support for any particular view of the matter at all, nor did he seem to have understood the conventional theory of Synoptic origins. In reference to Q, for example, Welch commented, "The assumption here is that Matthew, Mark, and Luke had access to a common source that no longer survives" (220). As explained above, however, Q stands for the hypothetical common source thought to have been used by Matthew and Luke but *not* by Mark.

Welch is not the only LDS scholar who was aware that Synoptic criticism poses a challenge for the ST but who did not come to terms with the major approaches to the Synoptic problem. Don Sorensen, in his critique of an earlier article appealing to Synoptic criticism as a problem for the ST, suggested, "That Mark was written first and that Matthew used Mark and Q seem irrelevant since the sermon might have been part of Q" (D. Sorensen 2004, 121). As has already been noted, however, if there was a Q there is every reason to believe that the sayings of Jesus found in the SM did not appear there in the same order or in exactly the same form as in Matthew 5-7. Sorensen correctly noted that the two-document or two-source theory is not the only viable view in Gospel scholarship but like Welch failed to adopt a specific alternative position and argue for it, though he mentioned briefly the theory that Luke was dependent on Matthew (121-22).

Robert L. Millet, a professor of scripture at BYU, is one of the most influential LDS theologians today. In the 1980s he wrote a couple of articles in which he addressed the Synoptic problem (Millet 1985b, 1986). He noted that "the general consensus" (something of an overstatement even then) favours the "Two-Document"

view that Matthew and Luke used Mark as well as the hypothetical "sayings source" known as Q (Millet 1986, 49). He commented, "For Latter-day Saints, it is not difficult to believe that God could reveal the very same words to Matthew and Luke that he inspired Mark to record" (50). As noted earlier, this suggestion is not plausible in view of the many verbal *dissimilarities* among the Synoptic Gospels. One may agree that God inspired the Gospel authors to write as they did, but inspiration does not account for the combination of agreements and disagreements in wording and order among the Synoptic Gospels. Millet also suggested that "it would not be out of harmony with principles of truth for one Gospel writer to utilize the writings of another." He concluded that not enough information is available to resolve the matter, so that "we are left to our own reasoning as to the exact manner and time in which the Gospels were formed and prepared" (50).

LDS scholars Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, both specialists in the NT, agreed that Markan priority is "the simplest explanation" for Matthew and Luke's material in common with Mark (Holzapfel and Wayment 2005a, xxii). To explain the material common only to Matthew and Luke, however, they appear to have combined elements of more than one Synoptic theory. They stated that Matthew and Luke independently "used a common 'oral source'" (xxii). Later in another essay in the same volume, Wayment said that they Matthew and Luke may have used "other earlier sources lost to us today," and cited evangelical NT scholar Robert Stein's textbook defending the two-document theory (Wayment 2005a, 26). In the next breath, though, Wayment stated, "In all probability, Mark was written first, followed by Matthew. Subsequently, Luke made use of Mark and Matthew and other traditions that were then available" (26). Here Wayment appears to have endorsed the "Mark without Q" theory rather than Markan priority plus Q.

In a more recent article specifically on Q, Wayment again appeared to accept Markan priority while raising doubts about Q (Wayment 2009 [no pagination]). The article sought to explain to Latter-day Saints why the Q issue is significant and why Q studies raise serious difficulties for the LDS view of Jesus and of the early church. Hypothetically, the idea of a source of Jesus' teachings earlier than the NT Gospels should not be troubling to Mormons, but Q as conventionally understood in modern scholarship leads to unacceptable implications. Wayment correctly pointed out that "there is no scientific way to verify what was not in Q," so that theories about

Christian origins built on what was supposedly lacking in Q (notably miracles, church organization, Messianic claims, and Jesus' prophecies of his redemptive death) rest on a dubious foundation. "The problem lies not necessarily in Q but in what Q has become." Once again, though, Wayment offered no clear alternative. He mentioned very briefly the hypothesis advanced by Farrer, Gould, and Goodacre (Markan priority without Q) as well as the "Augustinian" view (Matthean priority) but neither defended nor endorsed either of these positions. One of the main objections Wayment raised against Q was the difficulty it poses for the inclusion of the SM in the Book of Mormon. The similarity of wording between Matthew's SM and the Book of Mormon's Sermon to the Nephites suggests that the SM "was composed no later than a few years after Jesus' death" if not, as Mormons believe, by Jesus himself. Of course, Wayment's argument, presented for the benefit of LDS readers, presupposed the historicity of the Sermon in its Book of Mormon context.

One well-known LDS scholar who has endorsed Markan priority is Stephen E. Robinson. He acknowledged that "according to current scholarship both Matthew and Luke were written after Mark and used Mark as a base text from which to write their own Gospels" (Robinson 1991, 47). Robinson erroneously claimed that this means that Matthew and Luke "added to" and "took away" from Mark in order to defuse the criticism that Joseph Smith added to and took away from the Bible (46-49). He argued that two of the Gospel writers must have done this even if Mark was not the first Gospel, because he considered it a "fact" that the Synoptic Gospels are "literarily interdependent" (48). Robinson's conclusion is incorrect because Matthew and Luke actually did nothing to the Gospel of Mark. Producing their own writing and using Mark as a source (not as a "base text") is not the same thing as producing an altered version of Mark or other books of the Bible, which is precisely what Joseph Smith did in his supposed "inspired" version of the Bible (commonly called the Joseph Smith Translation). Setting aside Robinson's tendentious reason for bringing up the matter, he clearly acknowledged literary dependence among the Synoptic Gospels, and he appeared to accept Markan priority.

Another LDS scholar who has clearly accepted the dominant theory of Synoptic origins is Gaye Strathearn, a professor of ancient scripture at BYU (Strathearn 2006). She noted that although early church writers typically favoured Matthean priority, most modern scholars "believe that Mark was the first written

Gospel and that Matthew used it as a source for his own Gospel" (144). She acknowledged that this theory has "some difficulties" but presented "two arguments that are compelling for me and for most scholars." The first is the fact that Matthew and Luke tend to follow Mark's order, with Matthew doing so most consistently in the second half of his Gospel, and where Matthew departs from Mark's order he does so in keeping with what appear to be his "editorial tendencies." Specifically, Strathearn noted that Matthew has arranged his material "into thematic blocks" such as the miracle stories in chapters 8-9 and the parable collection in chapter 13. Her second reason for accepting Markan priority is the evidence that in at least a dozen verses Matthew uses more common or understandable language where in Mark's parallel verses he uses a "rare or difficult word or phrase" (144).

Strathearn also accepted the idea of a Q source to explain "where Matthew and Luke shared material that is not found in Mark" (145). She noted that in the parallel quotations of John the Baptist's warning of judgment (Matt. 3:7-10; Luke 3:7-9) "the Greek in these passages is almost exactly the same and suggests to scholars that they borrowed from a written, rather than an oral, source." The discovery of Thomas, which is essentially a collection of "purported sayings of Jesus without any narrative," shows that the idea of Q as a sayings source is plausible. Like most evangelicals, she rejected much of the "Q scholarship" that has emerged (145, 154 n. 26). However, she found "the basic concept of a written source of Jesus' sayings compelling and helpful in identifying Matthew's editorial work, particularly in chapters 4-11, where the sayings shared by Matthew and Luke are most prevalent" (145).

Strathearn not only accepted Markan priority and Q; she also acknowledged that Matthew edited his sources in keeping with his thematic emphases, such as his portrayal of Jesus as "the new Moses" (146). She pointed out that Matthew edited his material to present Christ's teachings in "five major discourses," each concluded with the same Matthean line, "and it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these" sayings or parables (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1; see above, §4.8). Strathearn accepted a modest, "minimalist" use of redaction criticism, acknowledging "that Matthew has reworked the order of events and retold the stories of Jesus in a way that would better emphasize and teach doctrines that were important for his audience without having to create fictional events or sayings" (154 n. 28).

Strathean's treatment of the Synoptic problem, as brief as it was, appears to be the most informed analysis from a Mormon scholar to date. Her essay and the work of Wayment and Robinson suggest that some LDS scholars are beginning to come to terms, however haltingly, with Synoptic criticism.

4.10 Authorship, Date, and Provenance

In historical criticism (see §3.3.2) the three issues of authorship, date, and provenance (the place from which a book originated) are generally closely related, and it will be convenient to discuss these questions together with regard to the Gospel of Matthew. The book contains no explicit statements answering these questions, and the earliest external information apparently identifying the author as the apostle Matthew comes from the early second century. However, since this external information appears to describe Matthew's work as a Hebrew Gospel (see §4.3.2), there is doubt about its relevance to the question of the authorship of the Greek Gospel that bears Matthew's name.

The traditional Christian view is that the book was written by Matthew, the former tax-collector who became one of the twelve apostles, and thus presents an authoritative account about Jesus' life, teachings, acts, death, and resurrection written by someone who knew Jesus personally and was an eyewitness of some of the events it narrates. This is also at least the traditional, common view among Mormons (*EM*, 869) and is accepted by some LDS scholars, notably in this context John Welch (e.g., Welch 1999, 225, 229).

With few exceptions, NT scholars today agree that the Gospel of Matthew was written by a Jewish Christian somewhere in Galilee or Syria between the years AD 50 and 90. The most notable exception in recent years is John P. Meier, who maintained that the author was probably a Gentile Christian writing in the 80s (see his 1992 article in *ABD*, 4:623-27). That the Gospel was written in the first century is certain because it is quoted by Ignatius (e.g., *Poly.* 2.2, quoting Matt. 10:16) in the first decade of the second century. The precise location where the Gospel was written cannot be determined even if one assumes the apostle was the author, but the consensus that it was written in either Galilee or Syria (perhaps in or around Antioch) may be accepted with a fair degree of confidence.

Although most evangelicals accept the traditional view that the apostle Matthew wrote the Gospel (as do most Mormons, as noted above), the Gospel says nothing requiring it. One cannot prove apostolic authorship to be correct, and the Gospel's historical reliability and inspiration do not depend on it. One should note that the range of commonly proposed dates for the Gospel is only about thirty years. Nothing inside the book identifies its author, either by name or by claiming that he was an eyewitness to any of the events it narrates, so that to question the traditional view is not to question any claim made by the book itself. It is probably fair to say that evangelical scholars generally express less assurance in the traditional authorship of Matthew than they do the authorship of the other three Gospels.

Surveying the literature on the subject from 1990 to the present, most NT scholars accept one of three views regarding the authorship and date of the Gospel.

(1) Most but by no means all evangelical scholars attribute the Gospel to the apostle Matthew as the most likely author. Those who accept apostolic authorship generally suggest that the Gospel was written either in the mid to late 50s or the early 60s (Guthrie 1990, 43-56; Blomberg 1992, 41-44; L. Morris 1992, 8-15; Gundry 1994, 599-622; Gibbs 2006, 59-66; Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles 2010, 180-84) or sometime in the 60s (Carson, Moo, and Morris 1992, 76-79; France 1998, 82-91; Turner 2008, 11-14; Carson 2010, 40-45; Osborne 2010, 33-35; Evans 2012b, 1-5).

(2) Some evangelical scholars favour the view that the Gospel was written by an unknown Jewish Christian in the 70s and incorporated special material (perhaps a sayings source) from Matthew (Mounce 1991, 1-3; deSilva 2004, 234-39; Witherington 2006, 4-11, 28-29; Keener 2009a, 38-44). Ben Witherington, for example, suggested that the Gospel was named for Matthew because he was the source of the material unique to that Gospel (material scholars commonly dub "M"). Donald Hagner leaned to this view while allowing that it is also possible that Matthew was the author of the book; he suggested that the book may have been written either in the 60s or perhaps around 80 (Hagner 2012, 193-96).

(3) Non-evangelical scholars generally reject apostolic authorship and hold that the author was an unknown Jewish Christian probably writing in the 80s (Harrington 1991, 8-9; Brown 1997, 208-212, 216-17; Nolland 2005, 2-4; Luz 2007, 58-59; Powell 2009, 107-109). While these scholars do not necessarily deny that the

apostle Matthew was in some fashion a source behind part of the Gospel, they do not think this possibility is particularly likely or that it is relevant to the study of the book.

Although scholars who favour the third view commonly maintain that Markan priority rules out apostolic authorship of Matthew as a serious possibility, in fact most of the scholars cited above who favour the first view accept Markan priority. Those who attribute the Gospel to the apostle Matthew and who accept Markan priority accept the tradition that Mark's Gospel was based on the preaching of the apostle Peter. Thus one's solution to the Synoptic problem does not dictate one's view of the authorship of the Gospel of Matthew. However, Markan priority does tend to make a date in the 60s or 70s more likely than a date in the 50s, though even here there is room for disagreement.

Within the context of the present study, the first and second views are both plausible, and little if anything of significance depends on which of those two views one accepts. It is sufficient for the purposes of this study to conclude that the Gospel was probably written in the 60s or 70s, either by the apostle Matthew or by a Jewish Christian in the same theological and religious tradition as Matthew. Three principal sources appear to have been brought together in the Gospel: the Gospel of Mark, a source (probably written though possibly oral or a mix of the two media) that was also used by Luke ("Q"), and material uniquely contributed by Matthew ("M"). It is also possible that Matthew had produced a "sayings source" that included both "Q" and "M" and that was subsequently utilized in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

The conclusions drawn here regarding the origin of the Gospel of Matthew lead to the recognition that the Gospel of Matthew is the end result of a historical process involving both oral and written materials and consisting of repetition of sayings and stories, arrangement of materials, compilation of sources, and written composition of the Gospel. A historically credible explanation of the ST in the Book of Mormon must be reconcilable with the fact of that historical process.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the evidence pertaining to the origins and contents of the Gospel of Matthew. This evidence has shown that the Gospel was written in the second half of the first century, most likely in the 60s or 70s. It was

either written by the apostle Matthew or composed utilizing a source deriving from Matthew to supplement the account given in the Gospel of Mark, perhaps with an additional source or sources of information. A large portion of the material that did not derive from Mark evidently came from a source that was used independently by Luke in his Gospel.

The Gospel of Matthew was composed in Greek by an Aramaic-speaking Jewish Christian fluent in Greek and probably living in Galilee or Syria. Its contents were preserved intact continuously throughout church history in both Greek manuscripts and, by the end of the second century, in multiple versions in other languages. Its precise wording is known to a very high degree of accuracy through the attestation of early papyri fragments, the major codices of the fourth and fifth centuries, and a myriad of quotations from Matthew found in the patristic writings. In instances where viable variant readings exist in the extant manuscripts, the method known as reasoned eclecticism provides a means for discerning, usually with at least a fair degree of confidence, which of the variant readings is correct.

The Gospel is written in the genre of ancient Greco-Roman biography though with a perspective influenced by the historical narratives of the OT. Its biographical purpose and factual claims receive substantial confirmation from historical geography, archaeology, and other ancient literature, all of which show that Matthew's narrative is solidly rooted in the physical, historical, religious, and cultural contexts of the life of Jesus. Like Mark and Luke, Matthew follows a general chronological order of presentation consistent with biography. However, careful examination of Matthew's five blocks of Jesus' oral teaching materials, along with a comparison of Matthew and Luke, shows that Matthew has arranged those materials in a distinctive, thematically ordered fashion.

The findings of this chapter with regard to the sources and arrangement of Jesus' sayings in Matthew have direct implications for understanding the origins and arrangement of the SM. These and other issues pertaining to the SM of relevance to the historical critical study of the sermon in its Book of Mormon setting are considered in the next chapter.

5 CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

This chapter builds on the preceding chapter's study of the Gospel of Matthew by examining select critical issues pertaining to the Sermon on the Mount (SM) in Matthew. The study of the SM in its Matthean context is necessary preparation for the study of the Sermon at the Temple (ST), which essentially duplicates the SM in the Book of Mormon with minor variations. The issues examined here are limited to those that are relevant to the task of assessing the historical authenticity of the ST in its Book of Mormon context. Thus, the topics treated are preparatory to the study of the ST treated in chapter 7. The material in this chapter focuses on three areas of concern: (1) significant variants in the Greek manuscripts of the SM (§5.1), (2) historical, critical insights into the origins of the SM, especially in its relation to the Sermon on the Plain (SP) in Luke (§5.2-§5.5), and (3) the genre and themes of the SM, especially focusing on John Welch's theory of the SM as a "temple text" (§5.6).

As in chapter 4, this chapter approaches the SM from the evangelical critical methodological stance set forth in chapter 3 of this study. It assumes, where this assumption is not challenged by LDS scholars, the authenticity of the individual sayings of Jesus found in the SM.

5.1 Textual Criticism and the Text of the Sermon on the Mount

5.1.1 Critical Editions Used in Studying the Text

As explained in the previous chapter (§4.2.4), this study uses as its default critical Greek NT text the 27th edition of the Nestle-Aland text (NA27). Most of the significant or potentially relevant variants from the readings followed in the NA27 are those associated with the "Byzantine" text, the form of the Greek NT text that dominates most of the medieval manuscripts (which because they are not as old

and locations are more numerous than the earlier, ancient manuscripts). This numerically dominant manuscript tradition has become known in contemporary scholarship as the Majority Textform (or more simply the Majority Text) through the publication of a critical edition of the Greek NT based on the principle of favouring the majority reading in the extant manuscripts (Robinson and Pierpont 2005). In some instances the KJV reflects readings found in the so-called *Textus Receptus* (TR) but that did not appear in the majority of the medieval Byzantine manuscripts. The TR refers to the Greek NT published by Robert Estienne (also known as Stephanus) in 1550. In 1894, F. H. A. Scrivener published a critical edition of the Greek NT (Scrivener 1894) showing the text used in the KJV, which in the SM always corresponds to the TR.

For the sake of simplicity, rather than citing lists of manuscripts for each reference, in most instances the variants will be referenced by the critical edition favouring those readings. These will usually be NA27, the default text for most contemporary biblical studies, and TR, the text reflected in the KJV. In those few places where the TR disagrees with the Majority Text, the latter will also be cited.

Except for parts of two verses, there are only minor variations in the extant manuscripts of the Greek text of the SM. A comparison of the critical editions shows that no whole verse of the 107 verses of the SM (Matt. 5:3-7:27) is in question. The lengthiest variations are found in Matthew 5:44b and 6:13b, where the KJV follows the medieval Greek manuscript tradition that includes twelve and fifteen words respectively not found in the earliest manuscripts. However, comparatively minor variants occur throughout the SM. Variants with significant manuscript support, to the extent that they have been followed in English versions, and that can affect the translation of the text occur in about 23 of the 107 verses of the SM. An additional 17 verses have variants that can affect translation and that have sufficient support to merit mention in the apparatus (footnotes) of NA27.

A careful analysis of the textual variants in the Greek text of the SM is important preparation for comparing the wording of the ST with that of the SM. If the ST generally follows readings better attested than those followed in the KJV, that finding would be evidence for the independence of the ST from the KJV and of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. On the other hand, if the ST generally follows the KJV in accepting readings that are inferior, secondary variants, that finding

would be evidence for the dependence of the ST on the KJV and against the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. The reasoning by which text-critical findings are relevant to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, and the relationship of the text of the ST to the KJV text of the SM, will be treated thoroughly in chapter 7 (§7.1).

5.1.2   Conjectural Emendations in the Sermon on the Mount

Before considering variants in the Greek manuscripts of the SM, something may be said briefly about those places in the SM where scholars have sometimes proposed that the text originally was worded in a way found in *none* of the extant manuscripts. In textual criticism, such proposed revisions are called *conjectural emendations*.

In a helpful article on the subject of conjectural emendations in Matthew, David Alan Black reviewed seventeen such proposed emendations (D. Black 1989), half a dozen of them in the SM. (One may note in passing that even if *all* of these emendations were accepted, they would amount to only about one-half of one per cent of the words in the SM.) These include the suggestion that Matthew 5:3 originally said "for they shall be made rich," that Matthew 6:28 said "beat (flax)" instead of "toil," that "what is valuable" (*timion*) was misread as "what is holy" (*hagion*) in Matthew 7:6, and that Matthew 6:5 originally read "in the agora" instead of "in the synagogues." Black agreed with famed textual critic Bruce Metzger's stance: "The only criterion of a successful conjecture is that it shall approve itself as inevitable" (Metzger 1968, 183, quoted in D. Black 1989, 2). That is, a conjectural emendation should be accepted only if (a) a plausible explanation can be given for how the reading was lost and replaced by the wording found in the extant manuscript tradition *and* (b) if the emendation resolves an otherwise inexplicable problem (something meaningless or just obviously wrong) in the extant text. Black concluded that none of the seventeen conjectural emendations rises to that level.

For all practical purposes, then, the task of textual criticism with regard to the SM is simply to assess in cases of variant readings in the extant manuscripts which of those extant readings is more likely to be earlier. Thus, comparisons between the texts of the ST and the SM may proceed based on the available evidence of the different readings known from the extant manuscripts.

5.1.3   Variants Not Affecting Translation

Many of the variants in the text of the SM must be excluded from consideration in this study as irrelevant, for the simple reason that they do not affect the translation of the text into English. Since they do not affect translation, they have no potential relevance to the relationship between the English SM in the KJV with the English ST in the Book of Mormon.

For example, because of the flexibility of Greek syntax (word order), in a few places a word or phrase will be located in one place in the sentence in some manuscripts and in another place in other manuscripts. For example, in Matthew 5:30 the phrase *eis geennan* ("into Gehenna" or "into hell") appears at the very end of the sentence in the TR but in the NA27 the verb stands to the last position. As Welch correctly points out, "in English this phrase can stand only at the end of the sentence…the only place where English syntax will allow," and therefore the varying positions of the phrase in the Greek text do not affect its translation in English (Welch 1999, 203). Similarly, in Jesus' statement "you cannot make one hair white or black" (Matt. 5:36), the TR places the verb *poiēsai* ("make") at the very end of the clause, while the NA27 text places it after the word *leukēn* ("white"). (The manuscript readings are actually more diverse still: at least five different word orders for this clause have been identified in the extant manuscripts.) Since English syntax requires the word order "you cannot make…," this variant does not affect the translation of the passage. Similar variants in syntax that do not affect translation occur elsewhere in the SM (*humōn*, Matt. 5:20; *met' autou*, 5:25; *poiēsai*, 5:36; *ē*, 6:22; *tēn dokon*, 7:5; *autou*, Matt. 7:24, 26).

Some variants do not affect translation because they involve words that are untranslatable or that are often left untranslated. The colourless conjunction *de*, which is often left untranslated, occurs in some manuscripts but not others at Matthew 6:1 and 7:15. The particle *an*, which is untranslatable in English, occurs in some manuscripts but not others at Matthew 6:5, while in Matthew 7:12 some use the particle *an* and others use *ean*—again with no possibility of a difference in translation. The Greek article ("the") is also commonly left untranslated. For example, in Matthew 5:45 and 7:21 some Greek manuscripts have *en tois ouranois* ("in the heavens") while others have *en ouranois* ("in heavens"), but since in English

idiom both are commonly translated "in heaven" the difference does not show up in translation. Similarly, in the TR Matthew 6:10 says *epi tēs gēs* (literally "on the earth") rather than *epi gēs* ("on earth"), but the KJV and other versions based on that reading do not translate the article.

These examples do not exhaust the variants in the SM irrelevant to translation, but they illustrate the principle. All such variants will be ignored henceforth in this study.

5.1.4   Variants That May Affect Translation but Not Meaning

A second category of variants in the SM are those that may affect the wording of the English translation but not the resulting meaning. An example is found in Matthew 7:2, where the NA27 reading is *metrēthēsetai* ("measured") while the TR reading (though not the Majority Text reading) is *antimetrēthēsetai* ("measured again" or "measured in return"). Since the statement "with the measure you use it will be measured to you" (ESV) includes the idea of reciprocation or return expressed by the prefix *anti*, the meaning of the sentence is the same with or without translating that prefix as "again" (KJV).

Welch has correctly stated that regardless of the variant in Matthew 7:2 "the sentence means exactly the same thing" (Welch 1990, 155; Welch 1994a, 160; Welch 1999, 204). He cited this text as one of several in the SM where he argues the meaning is "essentially" the same (Welch 1999, 202). Since such variants "make no perceptible difference in the meaning of the text," he argued, this means that the Book of Mormon "renders the text into English quite acceptably" (Welch 1990, 147), giving "a clear and appropriate translation of the essential meaning of these passages" regardless of the Greek textual variants (Welch 1999, 202). While Welch's point is valid, it does not address the real problem that textual criticism raises with regard to the ST. As is explained fully in chapter 7, the issue is *not* whether the Book of Mormon wording in the ST would be a serviceable translation of the SM, but whether its wording, as a supposed translation *of the ST* (not of the SM), reflects dependence on the KJV. Thus, variants that affect translation but not meaning are still potentially relevant to the authenticity of the ST in the Book of Mormon.

5.1.5   Variants That May Affect both Translation and Meaning

A third category of variants and the most potentially significant are those that may affect both translation *and* meaning. It is important here to understand that a variant may affect the meaning without *changing* the meaning or resulting in a *contrary* meaning. A variant that adds further information or ideas may affect the meaning of the text without necessarily changing the meaning to something contrary to what other variant or variants of the text express. Any variant that contributes to meaning in the text should be counted as affecting meaning whether or not the variant results in a different or contrary meaning.

A good example is the inclusion in Matthew 5:27 of the words *tois archaiois* ("by them of old time," KJV) in the TR (though not in the Majority Text). One may agree, as Welch argued, that these words simply make explicit what the reader can infer from the otherwise parallel clauses in Matthew 5:21 and 5:33, where the words *tois archaiois* undoubtedly appear (Welch 1999, 202). Nevertheless, the words contribute meaning in Matthew 5:27. It does so by reminding hearers and readers of the role of those men of old already mentioned previously, connecting more clearly and emphatically the units of discourse introduced with these parallel clauses.

Other variants affect meaning in far less subtle ways. As has already been mentioned, the KJV includes substantial text in Matthew 5:44 and 6:13b found in the TR but not in NA27. In Matthew 5:44, the words "bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," as well as the words "which despitefully use you, and" in the last clause, translate a dozen Greek words in the TR but not in NA27. The doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer in the KJV, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (6:13b), translate fifteen Greek words in the TR not found in NA27. Of course, these two sizable additions do not *contradict* the meaning of the text as it reads without them, but they do contribute additional meaning to the two passages and so significantly *affect* their meaning by way of addition.

Table 15 below presents an overview of all of the variants in the SM that may affect translation, meaning, or both. Where a variant may affect meaning but only by making some qualification explicit that the reader might plausibly understand without it, the mark in the far right column is placed in parentheses.

Verse	Variants	Affects Only Translation	May Affect Meaning
Table 15. Variants in the Sermon on the Mount that May Affect Translation or Meaning			
5:4-5	Some mss. change the order of these verses	x	
5:4	Some mss. add *nun* ("now")		(x)
5:11	*pseudomenoi* ("falsely," TR; NA27 brackets)		(x)
5:11	D has *dikaiosunē* ("righteousness") instead of *emou* ("my")		x
5:22a	*eikē* ("without a cause," TR)		(x)
5:22b	Sinaiticus, D, W, and a few other mss. have *racha* instead of *raka* ("raca," KJV)	x	
5:25b	*se paradō* repeated ("deliver you," TR)	x	
5:27	*tois archaiois* ("by/to them of old," TR)		(x)
5:29	D and some versions have *apelthē* ("go away") instead of *blēthē* ("cast")		x
5:30	*blēthē* ("cast," TR); *apelthē* ("go away," NA27)		x
5:32a	*hos an apolusē* ("whoever divorces," TR) *pas ho apoluōn* ("everyone divorcing," NA27)	x	
5:39	*sou* ("your," TR; NA27 brackets)	x	
5:44	*eulogeite tous katarōmenous humas kalōs poieite tois misountas humas…epēreazontōn humas kai* ("bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you…despitefully use you, and," TR)		x
5:47a	*philous* ("friends," Byzantine); *adelphous* ("brothers," TR, NA27)		x
5:47b	*telōnai* ("tax-gatherers" or "publicans," TR); *ethnikoi* ("Gentiles," NA27)		x
5:48	*en tois ouranois* ("in heaven," TR); *ouranios* ("heavenly," NA27)	x	
6:1	*eleēmosunēn* ("alms," TR); *dikaiosunēn* ("righteousness," NA27)		x
6:2	Sinaiticus and one late miniscule repeat *amen*	x	
6:4	*autos* ("himself," TR)	x	
6:4, 6, 18	*en tō phanerō* ("in the open," "openly," TR)		x
6:7	B and a few other mss. have *hupocritēs* instead of *ethnikoi* ("Gentiles")		x
6:8	B and a few mss. add *ho theos* ("God"); a couple of late mss. add *ho ouranios* ("heavenly")		(x)
6:10	D and a few early Latin manuscripts omit *hōs en ouranō kai epi gēs* ("as in heaven also on earth")		x

6:12	*aphiemen* (present, "we forgive," TR); *aphēkamen* (aorist, "we have forgiven," NA27)		x
6:13b	*hoti sou estin hē basileia kai hē dunamis kai hē doxa eis tous aiōnas amēn* ("for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen," TR); other mss. have other doxological additions		x
6:14a	D and L omit *gar* ("for")	x	
6:14b	L and other mss. add *ta paraptōmata autōn* at the end	x	
6:15a	*ta paraptōmata autōn* in the first clause ("their trespasses," TR)	x	
6:22	Sinaiticus and a few other mss. omit *oun* ("therefore")	x	
6:24	L and 037 add *oiketēs* ("servant")		x
6:25	*e ti piēte* ("or what to drink," in brackets in NA27; TR has with no brackets)		x
6:33	*tou theou* ("of God," in brackets in NA27; TR has with no brackets)		(x)
7:2	*antimetrēthēsetai* ("measured again" or "measured in return," TR); *metrēthēsetai* ("measured," Majority Text, NA27)	x	
7:6	*katapatēsōsin* (aorist subjunctive, "trample," TR); *katapatēsousin* (future indicative, "will trample," NA27)	x	
7:11	L and a few mss. have *agatha* ("good things") instead of *domata agatha* ("good gifts")	x	
7:12	Sinaiticus, L, and a few other mss. omit *oun* ("therefore")		x
7:13	Sinaiticus and other mss. omit *hē pulē* ("the gate")		x
7:19	L, Z, and other mss. add *oun* ("therefore")	x	
7:21b	W, 038, and a few other mss. add *autos eiseleusetai eis tēn basileian tōn ouranōn* ("he will enter the kingdom of heaven")		(x)
7:22	Sinaiticus adds *polla* ("many") after *daimonia*		x
7:23	L, 038, and other mss. add *pantes* ("all")	x	
7:24	*homoiōsō auton* ("I will liken him," TR); *homoiōthēsetai* ("will be likened," NA27)		x
7:27	038 and a few other mss. add *sphodra* ("greatly," "exceedingly") at the end	x	

5.1.6 "Without a Cause" in Matthew 5:22

The textual question in the SM that has received the most attention in discussions of the ST is the presence or absence of the Greek word *eikē*, meaning

"without a cause," in Matthew 5:22. The question is important because LDS scholars view the omission of the words "without a cause" from the ST as evidence that Joseph Smith was translating an authentic ancient text in which the word was properly omitted from the sermon. The issue of the omission of this phrase from the ST will be examined in the corresponding section of chapter 7 (§7.1.5). Here the significance of the issue for the exegesis of Matthew 5:22 will be considered.

As a way of approaching this question, consider another textual variant that appears several verses earlier in the SM. In Matthew 5:11, most if not all English versions include the word "falsely" or some equivalent in referring to those who "shall say all manner of evil against you falsely" (KJV). NA27 places the Greek word *pseudomenoi*, "falsely," in brackets, not without reason: it is missing in an important sixth-century Greek NT codex (D) and in the Old Latin and Syriac versions from the third and fourth centuries. Since it seems that a scribe would have been far more likely to insert such a word to clarify the text than to omit it, there is some plausibility to the view that the word was added early in church history and became the dominant reading. On the other hand, the manuscript support for the omission is too weak to establish that reading as anything more than a possibility. Thus, which reading was earlier is difficult to say with certainty, though probably the word should be judged original (see Holmes 1986). However, while omitting the word would affect the translation, it would not affect the text's meaning, because it is clearly assumed that the evil things being said about the disciples are false (the disciples could hardly be blessed by God if the criticisms were true!).

A similar point about implicit meaning can be made about Matthew 5:22. Here most Greek manuscripts and versions include the word *eikē* ("without a cause") but NA27, following the early manuscript evidence from P64 (ca. AD 200) and the fourth-century codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, omits this word. Very few scholars claim that the word was part of the original Gospel of Matthew; David Alan Black is the only noteworthy exception (D. Black 1988). The only modern English version that translates the word as part of Matthew 5:22 is the NKJV. Once again, "it is much more likely that the word was added by copyists in order to soften the rigor of the precept, than omitted as unnecessary" (Metzger 1994, 11), let alone that it was omitted to make the saying more demanding (as argued by D. Black 1988, 4-5). Nor is it likely, even if possible, that the word was omitted accidentally; Stan Larson's

suggestion of homoeoarchton (accidentally skipping *eikē* because it started with the same letter as the next word, *enochos*) is at most possible (Larson 1993, 128). Thus, Larson's claim that this variant presents "a genuinely ambiguous case" in which any conclusion "remains tentative" (Larson 1993, 128) is unjustified.

However, as in the case of "falsely" in Matthew 5:11, the *idea* expressed by "without a cause" is implicit in Matthew 5:22. Jesus' warning is not condemning *all* anger but is referring in context to sinful, unrighteous anger. As Craig Keener pointed out, most hearers in the first century would have "understood that such general principles expressed in proverbs and similar sayings needed to be qualified in specific situations" (Keener 2009a, 184). Jesus himself could get angry with other people (cf. Mark 1:41 NIV; 3:5), as can be seen in his cleansing of the temple (Matt. 21:12-13) and his railing woes against the Pharisees (Matt. 23).

Additional examples of the principle at work here may be found in the immediate context in statements where no textual variant is involved. For instance, in the same verse Jesus warns about calling someone a "fool" (*mōros*), but toward the end of the SM he states that anyone who fails to follow his teachings is "foolish" (7:22), and later in Matthew he denounces the Pharisees as "fools" (23:17). Reading Jesus' statement in the context of the Gospel as a whole requires understanding that statement as a qualified warning against sinfully calling people fools, despite the lack of an explicit qualification to that effect in *any* manuscripts of Matthew 5:22. Jesus was not contradicting himself here, nor was Matthew; the point in Matthew 5:22 is that sinful words and attitudes are still sinful and are as deserving of God's condemnation as the sinful act of murder (see further Witherington 2006, 129-30). Similarly, Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:28 forbidding looking on a woman with lust carries the unstated yet obvious and perfectly valid exception "except for his wife," since of course one cannot commit adultery with one's own wife. The early church father Theophilus made this exception explicit (in *To Autolycus* 3.13).

Likewise, Jesus' condemnation of "whoever is angry with his brother" properly exempts justified, righteous anger, such as Jesus himself exhibited at times. David Instone-Brewer concluded that the manuscripts that add "without a cause" (*eikē*) are merely making explicit what is already implicit and recognizable as such to all except "the most legalistic readers" (Instone-Brewer 2002, 153). He pointed out that Matthew did this himself in his reporting of some of Jesus' sayings. "It is not unusual

for Matthew to add material that doesn't appear in Mark, and it is not contradictory for Matthew to add an exception to what appears in Mark as an absolute statement" (153). For example, to Jesus' statement that "no sign shall be given to this generation" (Mark 8:12) Matthew adds "except the sign of the prophet Jonah" (Matt. 12:39) (153). The scribe or scribes who added *eikē* to the saying when copying Matthew were probably just making explicit what an astute reader would have known implicitly. Instone-Brewer gave a helpful analogy: when a New Yorker says "No one can carry a handgun" this statement implicitly assumes that law enforcement officers are exempt (154). Such statements are made in the context of "common background knowledge" shared by the speaker and hearers.

Thus, Welch was incorrect in arguing that the inclusion or exclusion of *eikē* in Matthew 5:22 "has a significant impact on meaning." Specifically, its inclusion is not "a convenient loophole of self-justification or rationalization" (Welch 1999, 201). Rather, it makes explicit what in the context of Jesus' life and teaching is already implicit. The addition of *eikē* contributes or affects meaning by making the implicit explicit, but it does not alter or overturn the meaning of the text.

5.2 The Sermon on the Mount and Synoptic Parallels

The Sermon on the Mount (SM) contains sizable units of material found in the Gospel of Luke, most notably the discourse commonly called the Sermon on the Plain (SP). A comparison of the two texts is of direct and notable significance for the subject of this study. In considering the relationship of the ST to the SM, some understanding of the relationship of the SP to the SM will prove highly instructive. In particular, if the SP and SM are actually two different versions of one sermon delivered by Jesus on a particular occasion, that fact would have damaging implications regarding the authenticity of the ST, which as shall be seen in chapter 7 of this study consistently follows the order, content, and wording of the SM (specifically as it appears in the KJV) rather than that of the SP. Moreover, the SM actually contains material that is paralleled in *seven* discourse passages in Luke set in different contexts: the SP (Luke 6:20-49), a Lukan discourse on prayer (Luke 11:2-13), the Lukan discourse on seeking the kingdom first (Luke 12:22-34), and four shorter passages (Luke 12:58-59; 13:24-27; 14:34-35a; 16:13-18). There are even very slight parallels to the SM in sayings found in Mark (9:43, 47, 49-50;

11:25). It will therefore be necessary to say something about the significance of these other Synoptic passages for an understanding of the composition of the SM.

This section lays a foundation for making comparisons among these various passages by making detailed analyses of their similarities and differences in terms of discourse units, verses, word counts, and order of presentation.

5.2.1   The Texts of the Sermons on the Mount and the Plain

The SM is much longer than the SP: the SM consists of 107 verses and 1,937 words, whereas the SP consists of 30 verses and 569 words. (Word counts throughout this section refer to the Greek text as found in NA27, though the relative comparisons will be very similar for other editions of the Greek text and even for any typical English version.) 23 of the 30 verses in the SP (77%) have some parallel in 25 of the 107 verses of the SM. 222 of the 569 words of the SP (39%) are verbally paralleled in the SM. By *verbal parallel* is here meant the use of the same word in both texts in the same context, though the word may be in the same or different form (singular or plural, aorist or present, etc.). To put this figure in perspective, 174 of the 569 words in the SP (31%) are *verbal duplicates* (the same word in the same form) of words in the SM. (LDS scholar Thomas Wayment [2005b, 361] gave the figures as 150 out of 573 words of the SP as verbal duplicates of the SM, or 26%.) These verbal duplicates typically appear in short strings of a few words scattered throughout the parallel verses. The longest uninterrupted string of words that is *exactly* alike in the SM and the SP is a string of 14 words found in Matthew 7:3 and in the parallel verse Luke 6:41 (the speck in your brother's eye). The next longest such string is only 6 words, in Matthew 7:12 and the parallel in Luke 6:31 (the Golden Rule).

It is also useful to compare the verbal parallels only for those verses that have at least some parallel in verses in the other text. The 222 words in the SP that are paralleled in the SM occur in 23 verses of the SP containing a total of 449 words. Thus, for verses in the SP that are at least partially parallel to verses in the SM, 49% of their words are verbally parallel to words in the SM. In other words, for sayings of Jesus found in both sermons, half of the words of these sayings in the SP are the same as words in the parallel sayings in the SM.

The sayings common to the SP and the SM usually follow the same order. The SP varies from the SM in the order of shared sayings four times. That is, if the sayings in the SP perfectly followed the order of the SM, only four changes would result:

- Luke 6:29-30 (par. Matt. 5:39b-40, 42) would come before 6:27-28 (par. Matt. 5:44).
- Luke 6:35 (par. Matt. 5:45) would come before 6:32-33 (par. Matt. 5:46-47).
- Luke 6:31 (par. Matt. 7:12) would come after 6:41-42 (par. Matt. 7:3-5) and before 6:44 (par. Matt. 7:16a).
- Luke 6:43 (par. Matt. 7:18) would come after 6:44 (par. Matt. 7:16).

The only saying in the SP paralleled in the SM that appears in a different context is Luke 6:31 (the Golden Rule). That is, setting aside Luke 6:31, the other three differences in order are simple reversals of adjacent units of text. Moreover, three of the four differences in order appear in one part of the SP (Luke 6:27-33; the other is in 6:43-44). Of the 23 verses of the SP that have parallels in the SM, 18 verses (78%) appear in the same order as in the SM, and 22 of the 23 parallel verses (96%) appear in the same context as they do in the SM.

Both the SM and the SP begin with a group of beatitudes (Matthew has nine, Matt. 5:3-12, while Luke has four, Luke 6:20b-23) and end with the parable of the houses built on rock and on sand (Matt. 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49). Moreover, the very first beatitudes in both texts are verbally and conceptually parallel:

- "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3).
- "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20b).

Thus, despite the comparative brevity of the SP, the SP and the SM begin and end in the same way.

5.2.2   The Text of the Sermon on the Mount and Other Synoptic Parallels

The most notable difference of content between the SM and the SP are two large sections of discourse in the SM that have no parallel in the SP. The first of these large sections is 26 verses long (Matt. 5:13-38) and the second, all of Matthew

6, is 34 verses long (Matt. 6:1-34). Of the 83 verses of the SM not paralleled in the SP, 60 verses fall in these two sections. Although these large parts of the SM have no parallel in the SP, they do have partial parallels in other passages in Luke.

The most substantial parallel to the SM in Luke outside the SP appears in Luke 12:22b-34, which very closely parallels the section of the SM in Matthew 6:19-34 dealing with anxiety regarding material needs. The main difference between the two passages is that the sayings about the eye and serving two masters in Matthew 6:22-24 are not found in Luke 12 but appear in other parts of Luke (11:34-35; 16:13). Matthew's opening and concluding sayings in this unit (Matt. 6:19, 34) are also not found in Luke's version (which transitions in and out of this unit in a different way than Matthew), and Luke has one saying not found in Matthew (Luke 12:32). Omitting these non-paralleled sayings, the unit in Matthew has 11 verses and 202 words (Matt. 6:20-21, 25-33) and in Luke it has 12 verses and 197 words (Luke 12:22b-31, 33-34). There are 142 words that are verbally parallel in these two passages (74% of the words in Luke 12:22b-31, 33-34; 70% of the words in Matt. 6:19-21, 25-33). This is a much higher rate of verbal parallels than that between the SP and its parallel sayings in the SM, which as noted previously is 49%. The sayings follow the same order except that Luke places at the end of his unit (Luke 12:33-34) the sayings that parallel verses at the beginning of Matthew's unit (Matt. 6:20-21). Thus, 10 of the 12 parallel verses in the Lukan discourse (83%) appear in the same order as they do in the SM.

Consistent with the much higher rate of verbal parallels between Luke 12:22b-33 and Matthew 6:20-34 than between the SP and its parallel sayings in the SM, Luke 12 also has more striking examples of duplicate wording of sayings in the SM. For example, Matthew 6:29 (the saying about Solomon's clothing) is 15 words long and is exactly duplicated in Luke 12:27b except that the latter omits the optional word *hoti* ("that"). Jesus' opening saying about not being anxious in Luke 12:22b-23 is 28 words long; all of these words except the conjunction *gar* ("for") are exactly duplicated in Matthew 6:25, which also has three additional words not found in Luke (*humōn* twice, and *ouchi*).

Some 21 other verses of the SM are paralleled in six units of sayings material in Luke 11-16. Ten of these verses appear in two closely related units in Luke 11: a somewhat shorter version of the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2-4, cf. Matt. 6:9-13) and

the unit about asking, seeking, and knocking in prayer (Luke 11:9-13, cf. Matt. 7:7-11). The other 11 verses in the SM paralleled in Luke are individual sayings of Jesus that appear in varying contexts in five other passages in Luke:

1. Luke has sayings using the metaphor of a lamp (Luke 11:33-35) that appear in two separate contexts in the SM (Matt. 5:15; 6:22-23).

2. Luke 12:58-59 verbally parallels Jesus' saying about settling with one's opponent to avoid debtor's prison in Matthew 5:25-26 but in an entirely different context.

3. The saying in Luke 13:24 about being passing through a narrow door is only partially parallel conceptually to the saying about the narrow path to life in Matthew 7:14. In the same context, Luke includes a warning that the Lord will tell evildoers to depart (Luke 13:25b, 27) that is similar to Matthew 7:23.

4. Luke 14:34-35a is roughly parallel to the saying in Matthew 5:13 about salt.

5. Luke 16:13-18 includes three sayings of Jesus that appear in varying contexts in the SM: the saying about God and Mammon (Luke 16:13, cf. Matt. 6:24), the saying that not a letter of the Law would fail (Luke 16:17, cf. Matt. 5:18), and the saying about those who divorce and remarry committing adultery (Luke 16:18, cf. Matt. 5:32).

A survey of Synoptic parallels to the SM would be incomplete without mentioning the Gospel of Mark. There are sayings in Mark paralleling eight verses of the sayings of Jesus in the SM. Mark's account of Jesus' parables includes the saying about people not putting a lamp under a bushel and the warning that a person will be judged by the measure he uses to judge others (Mark 4:21, 24; cf. Matt. 5:14; 7:2). Jesus' speech in Mark warning against causing little ones to stumble includes the sayings about one's eye and hand causing one to stumble (Mark 9:43, 47, cf. Matt. 5:29-30) and a rough and incomplete parallel to the saying about salt (Mark 9:49-50, cf. Matt. 5:13). Mark's account of Jesus' controversy with the Pharisees about divorce includes the reference to Moses authorizing a certificate of divorce and Jesus' statement that whoever divorces and remarries commits adultery (Mark 10:4, 11; cf. Matt. 5:31-32 as well as Matt. 19:7, 9). Finally, in Mark's account of the cursing of the fig tree Jesus makes a statement about forgiving others and being forgiven by one's heavenly Father that is similar to a saying in the SM (Mark 11:25, cf. Matt. 6:14).

Table 16. The Sermon on the Mount and Synoptic Parallels		
Matthew 5-7 (SM)	**Luke 6 (SP)**	**Other**
5:3-12 Beatitudes (par. vv. 3, 6, 11-12)	**6:20b-23**	
5:13 You are the salt of the earth		Luke 14:34-35a (Mark 9:49-50)
5:14 The light of the world; a city on a hill		
5:15 People don't put lamps under baskets		Mark 4:21 Luke 8:16;11:33
5:16 Let your light shine		
5:17 I did not come to abolish the Law		
5:18 Until heaven and earth pass not one jot		Luke 16:17
5:19-20 Righteousness exceeding Pharisees		
5:21-24 You heard, No murder; angry with brother		
5:25-26 Reconcile with opponent or never get out		Luke 12:58-59
5:27-28 You heard, No adultery; looking with lust		
5:29-30 If your eye or hand makes you stumble		Matt. 18:8-9 Mark 9:43,47
5:31 It was said, Divorce with a certificate		Matt. 19:7 Mark 10:4
5:32 He divorces wife, makes her commit adultery		Matt. 19:9 Mark 10:11 Luke 16:18
5:33-37 Don't swear, just tell the truth (par. v. 34)		cf. Matt. 23:22
5:38 You heard, Eye for an eye		
5:39-48 Turn the other cheek; love your enemies	**6:27-30,32,35-36**	
6:1-8 Give alms in secret; pray in secret		
6:9-13 Lord's Prayer		**Luke 11:2-4**
6:14 If you forgive others, your Father will forgive you		Mark 11:25
6:15 If you don't forgive others, he won't forgive you		
6:16-18 Fast in secret		
6:19 Don't lay up treasures on earth		
6:20-21 Treasures in heaven; where your heart is		**Luke 12:33b-34**
6:22-23 Body's lamp is the eye; bad eye, dark body		Luke 11:34-35
6:24 No one can serve two masters		Luke 16:13
6:25-33 Don't worry; seek first the kingdom		**Luke 12:22-31**
6:34 So don't be anxious about tomorrow		
7:1-2a Don't judge	6:37a	
7:2b By your measure it will be measured to you	6:38b	Mark 4:24b
7:3-5 The speck and the log	**6:41-42**	
7:6 Don't give holy things to dogs or pearls to swine		
7:7-11 Ask, seek, knock; you give good things		**Luke 11:9-13**
7:12 What you want others to do for you, do for them	6:31	
7:13 Enter by narrow gate; broad way is destruction		
7:14 Way is narrow that leads to life and few find it		Luke 13:24a
7:15 Beware of false prophets in sheep's clothing		
7:16-21 Know by fruits; not everyone saying Lord	**6:44,43,46**	Matt. 12:33
7:22 Many will say they did miracles in my name		
7:23 I will say Depart, I never knew you		Luke 13:27
7:24-27 House on rock stood; house on sand fell	**6:47-49**	

The salt saying in Mark 9:49-50 is so different from the one in Matthew 5:13 that one might justifiably exclude it as a genuine parallel (especially since the parallel in Luke 14:34-35a is verbally closer to the SM saying). However, the close contextual link between this saying in Mark 9:49-50 and the sayings about one's eye and hand in 9:43, 47 suggests the parallel may be legitimate.

In all, 61 of the 107 verses in the SM (57%) are paralleled somewhere in Luke or Mark (see Table 16). 57 verses of the SM are paralleled in Luke (53%) and 8 verses of the SM are paralleled in Mark (7%). These parallels consist of the structurally and thematically similar but much shorter SP (25 verses of the SM), the discourse unit of sayings about anxiety in Luke 12 (11 verses of the SM), two closely connected units about prayer in Luke 11:2-4, 9-13 (10 verses of the SM), and other sayings scattered in several passages in Luke and Mark (15 verses of the SM). Thus, more verses in the SM are actually paralleled outside the SP (36 verses) than in the SP (25 verses).

5.3 The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain

5.3.1   One Sermon or Two?

An important question both for the interpretation of the SM and for considering its relationship to the Sermon at the Temple (ST) in the Book of Mormon is the question of the relationship of the SM to the SP in Luke 6:20b-49. Possible answers to this question include the following (for a more detailed analysis of the options with citations see Bock 1994, 931-32):

1. The SM and the SP are two compilations of sayings of Jesus originally spoken on unknown but presumably various occasions, deriving either from a common source (usually Q) or from sources dependent on a common source, or from one of the two authors (usually Matthew, with Luke drawing on him). According to this view, there was no historical sermon given on a specific occasion that is the specific origin of the SM or the SP. Scholars taking this view differ on how many of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the two texts actually derived ultimately from Jesus. Neither Mormons nor evangelicals accept this view.

2. The SM and the SP were given by Jesus on two different occasions and are to be read as more or less full transcripts of two separate sermons. According

to this view, Jesus gave the SM essentially as it reads in Matthew as a single sermon and with the structure or arrangement of sayings as they are found there. This is a popular view among both Mormons and evangelicals, although it is no longer widely held by evangelical biblical scholars.

3. The SP is a condensed version of the SM or of the source on which the SM and the SP were both dependent; that is, the SM is closer than the SP in form and contents to the sermon Jesus gave on that occasion. If this view is correct, then Jesus delivered the SM essentially as it reads in Matthew, while Luke has moved parts of the SM to other places in his Gospel, omitted other parts, and rearranged the remaining material to form the SP. Very few scholars, whether evangelical, Mormon, or other, take this view.

4. The SM is an expanded version of the SP or of the source on which the SM and the SP were both dependent; that is, the SP is closer than the SM in form and contents to the sermon Jesus gave on that occasion. In this view, Matthew combined the SP or something like it with material that Jesus actually presented on other occasions to create a thematically unified discourse that owes its selection and arrangement of sayings largely to Matthew. This view now dominates evangelical and non-evangelical biblical scholarship but is generally rejected by Mormons.

The first view would obviously be incompatible with the authenticity of the ST, since if Jesus never gave a sermon like either the SM or the SP in Galilee it would be unlikely in the extreme that he would have happened to preach to the Nephites a sermon so like the SM composed by Matthew. The second and third views would be generally compatible with the authenticity of the ST, since either view would mean that Jesus delivered the SM essentially as it reads in Matthew, and this in turn would be consistent with the claim that Jesus delivered basically the same sermon on another occasion, such as in preaching to the Nephites. On the other hand, the fourth view would pose nearly as insuperable an objection to the authenticity of the ST as the first, as it would mean that the SM that is so closely followed in the ST derives its inclusion and arrangement of Jesus' sayings largely from Matthew decades after Jesus' Galilean ministry.

The fourth view, it turns out, is far and away the best explanation for the textual evidence. This section will present evidence showing that the SP and the SM

are two versions of the same sermon, delivered by Jesus on one occasion, and thus will eliminate the first and second views mentioned above. Later sections of this chapter (§5.4–5.5) will present evidence against the third view and in support of the fourth.

5.3.2   Common Contents and Order of Material

As noted in the preceding section, the SM and the SP exhibit notable similarities in content and arrangement, most notably their similar beginning and conclusion (Lioy 2004, 90; Quarles 2011, 12). Both begin with a saying pronouncing the poor (or poor in spirit) to be blessed because the kingdom belongs to them (Matt. 5:3; Luke 6:20b). This saying is the first of a group of beatitudes that in both texts end with blessing pronounced on Jesus' disciples when they are persecuted (Matt. 5:10-12; Luke 6:22-23). Both end with the parable of the wise man who built his house on the rock and the fool who built his house on the sand (Matt. 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49). Between this beginning and conclusion both texts have several common units of discourse presented in the same order, with only one saying—the Golden Rule—presented in a significantly different part of the sermon in Luke than in Matthew (see Table 17).

Table 17. The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain		
	Matt. 5-7	**Luke 6**
Beatitudes: the poor…the persecuted	5:3-12	6:20b-23
Woes		6:24-26
Turn the other cheek; your shirt and your coat	5:38-42	6:27-30
Love your enemies, just like your Father	5:43-48	6:32-36
Don't judge	7:1-2	6:37-38
Blind leading the blind; a disciple and teacher		6:39-40
The speck and the log	7:3-5	6:41-42
The Golden Rule	***7:12***	***6:31***
Known by the fruit	7:16-20	6:43-44
From the abundance of the heart a man speaks		6:45
Those who say Lord, Lord, but do not obey	7:21-23	6:46
House on the rock stood; house on the sand fell	7:24-27	6:47-49

It is, of course, indisputable that Jesus said many things on more than one occasion. Every teacher does so. That Jesus had certain statements that he made more than once is hardly surprising. So, for example, both Matthew and Luke report

Jesus saying "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" on at least two different occasions (Matt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Luke 8:8; 14:35), and he might very well have said this many other times. Matthew reports Jesus repeating later in the Gospel sayings found in the SM, such as the sayings about one's eye or hand causing one to stumble (Matt. 5:29-30; 18:8-9), about divorce and remarriage (5:31-32; 19:7, 9), and about not swearing by heaven (5:34; 23:22). Jesus' saying about not putting a lamp under a basket, found in the SM (Matt. 5:14), occurs twice in Luke (8:16; 11:33). Jesus may also have told the same stories, or parables, on different occasions, as again teachers are wont to do. Therefore, one may agree that it is likely that Jesus said *many* of the things found in the SM on other occasions, though Welch overstated the matter in claiming that it is unlikely Jesus said *anything* in the SM only once (Welch 2009, 215).

That Jesus repeated on various occasions many of the statements found in the SM is one thing; that he repeated essentially the same sermon is another. It is admittedly possible that Jesus delivered speeches on more than one occasion that used the same introduction and conclusion, that followed the same outline, and that included similar contents. Despite this possibility, the similarities between the SM and the SP do render the view that they are reports of two historically different sermons somewhat less likely than not. The similarity in the order of the material is particularly telling since there is no logical or narrative thread requiring the material to follow a specific order. The SM is not a story with elements presented in consecutive narrative order; it is not an exposition of a passage of Scripture; and it is not a rational or systematic argument in which the order of presentation is dictated by the form of the argument. When Andrei Kodjak said that "we may assume that the Sermon on the Mount represents Christ's standard sermon" (Kodjak 1986, 168), the problem is that this claim is indeed little more than an assumption.

In addition to similarities in content and order, the SM and SP exhibit a large amount of verbal similarities, as explained in detail in the preceding section of this chapter (§5.2.1). About two-fifths of the Greek words in the SP have verbal parallels in the SM, and nearly a third of the words in the SP (174 out of 569, or 31%) appear verbatim or as exact verbal duplicates in the parallel statements of the SM. Since both Gospels are giving Greek translations of statements Jesus almost certainly

spoke in Aramaic, the verbal similarities between the parallel statements in the SM and the SP are all the more striking.

The similarities in content and order of shared material are thus logically compatible with all four views surveyed above. However, these similarities make the third view—that the SM and the SP derive from two different historical sermons of Jesus—less likely than the other explanations. LDS scholar Thomas Wayment acknowledged that these similarities in content, order, and wording support the view that the two passages derive from a speech given on a single occasion: "Although it is theoretically possible that they still represent two different sermons, that is highly unlikely" (Wayment 2005b, 361).

5.3.3   Common Narrative Historical Context

If the SM and the SP are two accounts of the same historical speech, one would expect that they would be placed in the same narrative historical context. This is in fact the case, making it highly probable that they are accounts of the same speech (cf. Quarles 2011, 12). Although the Synoptic Gospels do not always present events and speeches in the same order, in many cases they do agree in their order. Furthermore, in many instances additional information is given, such as references to specific historical events and to geographical locations, that place the Gospel narrative units in a clear chronological sequence and setting.

It is beyond dispute that Matthew and Luke place the SM and the SP in the same general period of Jesus' life. As Wayment pointed out, "Both Matthew and Luke include their respective sermons prior to the first mission of the disciples in Galilee and toward the beginning of the public ministry" (Wayment 2005b, 375). He recognized this fact as another piece of evidence indicating that the SM and the SP are versions of the same speech.

It is possible to be more precise still. All three of the Synoptic Gospels agree on the sequence of events shown in Table 18. After Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, he went for a forty-day fast into the wilderness of Judea, where he was tempted by the devil. Jesus then returned to Galilee where, according to Matthew and Luke, he went home to Nazareth before eventually settling in Capernaum. All three Synoptics agree that Jesus made Capernaum, a larger town near the Sea of Galilee, his base of operations from which he went out

to preach and heal people throughout Galilee. As news of Jesus' healing ministry spread and crowds began to gather, Jesus went up a mountain, where (Mark and Luke report) he chose the twelve, with the intention that he would later send them out to preach and heal people. He then returned to Capernaum, where he healed the servant boy of a Roman centurion. After taking a fishing boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee and ministering there, Jesus returned back across the sea to Capernaum, shortly afterward sending out the twelve on their first mission.

Table 18. The Sermon on the Mount/Plain in Synoptic Context			
Passage	Matthew	Mark	Luke
John the Baptist baptized Jesus	3:1-17	1:2-11	3:3-22
Jesus was tested in the wilderness	4:1-11	1:12-13	4:1-13
Went to Galilee	4:12	1:14	4:14-15
In Nazareth	(4:13a)		4:16-30
Left Nazareth for Capernaum	4:13-16	1:21a	4:31
Left Capernaum to preach throughout Galilee	4:23	1:35-39	4:42-44
Large crowds from all over came	4:24-25	3:7-12	*6:17-19*
Went up a mountain	5:1a	3:13	6:12
Chose the twelve		3:14-19	6:13-16
SERMON ON THE MOUNT/PLAIN	**5:3-7:27**		**6:20b-49**
Returned to Capernaum	8:1, 5	3:20	7:1
Healed the centurion's boy	8:5-13		7:2-10
Took a boat to the other side of the sea	8:18	4:35	8:22
Stilled the storm	8:23-27	4:36-41	8:22-25
Cast out the Gadarene demoniacs	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39
Crossed back over the sea to Capernaum	9:1	5:21	8:40
Sent out the twelve to preach and heal	10:1-42	6:7-13	9:1-6

Just two minor questions might be asked concerning this chronological account of Jesus' movements in his early ministry. Luke describes the crowds (6:17-19) after reporting Jesus' ascent up the mountain to choose the twelve (6:12-16) instead of before as in Mark, but it is clear even from Luke 4:42-44 that crowds had already been following him. Matthew gives a list of the twelve at the beginning of his account of the twelve being commissioned (10:2-4), but he does not say the twelve were chosen at that time, as LDS apostle and theologian Bruce McConkie recognized (McConkie 1965, 214). Thus, Matthew's account in this respect at least is chronologically consistent with Mark and Luke.

Readers of the Gospels often miss that Matthew and Luke have placed the SM and the SP in the same historical context because Matthew places several

events after the SM that Luke places before the SP. Most notably, the sequence of the healing of the paralytic, the call of Matthew, the discussion about fasting, the healing of the bleeding woman, and the raising of the little girl occurs after the SM in Matthew 9:2-26 but before the SP in Luke 5:18-56. However, as explained in the previous chapter, much of Matthew's arrangement appears to be thematic rather than strictly chronological (§4.8). Where Matthew's order of events agrees with both Mark's and Luke's, it is reasonable to assume that his order is generally chronological. This does not mean that the order in Mark and Luke is always chronological, since they do not always agree between them. For example, Luke, like Matthew, narrates the miracles of the bleeding woman and the little girl immediately after the pericopes about the paralytic, Matthew, and fasting, whereas in Mark the latter group of events is narrated before Jesus goes up the mountain (Mark 2:3-22) while the former group of events comes well afterward (Mark 5:21-43). Such differences may result from the use of different sources or from thematic considerations on the part of the author. Still, when all three of the Synoptic Gospels agree on the order of events, and when the order coordinates well with the geographical references in the narrative, the order may be regarded as having chronological significance.

The chronological agreement among the Synoptic Gospels regarding Jesus' movements and actions during this early period of his ministry permits some conclusions to be made with regard to the chronological setting of the SM and the SP. The synchronism among the three Synoptic Gospels shows that the references to Jesus going "to the mountain" (*eis to oros*) when large crowds were coming to him (Matt. 5:1; Mark 3:13; Luke 6:12) all pertain to the same event. Georg Strecker was therefore incorrect in claiming that the reference to "the mountain" in Luke 6:12 "only superficially" parallels Matthew 5:1 (Strecker 1988, 24). Likewise, Welch was mistaken when he said that Luke 6:12 refers to "another occasion" than the one in Matthew 5:1 (Welch 2009, 18). Both Matthew and Luke place their sermon after Jesus went up the mountain (Matt. 5:1; Luke 6:12; cf. Mark 3:13) and before he returned to Capernaum (cf. Mark 3:20) and healed the centurion's boy there (Matt. 8:1, 5-13; Luke 7:1-10). This means that Matthew and Luke each place the sermon in the same specific context. In short, Matthew reports Jesus giving the SM at the same time and situation as Luke reports Jesus giving the SP.

Given this unique historical setting and the structural, content, and verbal similarities between the SM and the SP, the view that the SM and the SP are accounts of sermons delivered by Jesus on two different occasions must be deemed highly implausible. Far and away the best and really only likely explanation for the evidence is that the SM and the SP are two accounts or versions of the same speech. The only way around this conclusion is Augustine's suggestion that Jesus might have delivered the SM on the mountain to the disciples and then gone down and delivered the SP immediately to the crowds (Augustine, *De consensu evangelistarum* 2.19.45). This idea has rarely been advocated in modern scholarship (the last known advocacy coming in Lange 1899, 99-100, who proposed that the two sermons were given on the same day). Apparently Augustine himself recognized the hypothesis as *ad hoc*, since he went on to offer an alternative suggestion (not mentioned in some summaries of Augustine's view, e.g., Lange 1899, 99; Plummer 1922, 176, followed by Bock 1994, 931) that Jesus had come down from a more elevated location on the mountain to a level place from which he gave the speech represented by both the SM and the SP (*De consensu evangelistarum* 2.19.47). This explanation avoids the *ad hoc* nature of the idea of two similar sermons on the same day and fits Luke's description of the location better than the theory of two speeches in two different places, as shall be shown next.

5.3.4   Common Geographical Setting

Perhaps the most popular objection to viewing the SM and the SP as accounts of the same speech is that Matthew locates the sermon on "the mountain" (Matt. 5:1) while Luke locates it on "the plain" (Luke 6:17 KJV). This objection, which seems quite reasonable based on the wording of these isolated verses in the KJV, falls when the passages are examined carefully in the Greek and in context. As for context, even some scholarly studies of the issue overlook the fact that Luke also reports Jesus going up "the mountain" (Luke 6:12) just before giving the SP. Jindrich Manék's article on the subject, for example, missed this fact, and also gave no consideration to the precise wording of Matthew 5:1 or Luke 6:17. He therefore searched for a purely theological reason for the assumed geographical difference between the settings of the SM and the SP (Manék 1967).

The Greek text of Luke describes the place as *topou pedinou*, "a level place" (so BDAG and other lexical reference works). The word *pedinos* (which literally meant flat, level, or low) does appear frequently in the LXX (about 21 times) as a substantive to denote a valley or plain. However, the use of *pedinos* as an adjective to modify *topos* ("place") in Luke 6:17 is unprecedented in any of those occurrences in the LXX. An unusual expression is found in Isaiah 13:2 LXX, *orous pedinou*, literally "a flat mountain," to translate the Hebrew *har-nispeh* meaning "bare mountain" or "bare hill." This is a different usage than Luke 6:17, but it does show that there is no necessary conflict in using both words in reference to the same location. Luke evidently refers to "a level place" to indicate that Jesus descended far enough down to arrive at a level place suitable for speaking in the hearing not only of the twelve but of all of his disciples and of the crowds. As D. A. Carson concluded, Luke's description "should not conjure up images of American prairie but a relatively flat place in rough, rocky, or hilly terrain" (Carson 2010, 159). The most accurate English rendering of *topou pedinou* in this context might be "plateau" (ibid.; also Bock 1994, 562). LDS scholar Daniel Ludlow, who recognized the SP as the same sermon as the SM, agreed that "Luke's reference to a plain could have meant a level place or plateau up in the mountains" (D. Ludlow 1982, 283; likewise McConkie 1965, 215).

It should also be noted that *to oros* (usually translated "the mountain") in both Matthew 5:1 and Luke 6:12 likely refers to "the hill country," a hilly region "that dominated the skyline surrounding Capernaum…. Both writers envisage a plateau in a hilly area" (Blomberg 1992a, 97; likewise France 2007, 156-57; Carson 2010, 159). The unqualified use of *to oros* in the Gospels often appears to have this meaning of the hill country (e.g., Matt. 5:1; 8:1; 14:23; 15:29), in contrast to references to a specific mountain such as a "high mountain" (Matt. 4:8; 17:1), "the Mount of Olives" (21:1; 24:3; 26:30), or perhaps "the mountain to which Jesus had directed them" (28:16).

Thus, a more careful examination of Matthew and Luke's description of the locale of the speech, far from suggesting they were given on two separate occasions, confirms that they are two accounts of the same speech.

5.3.5   Common Audience

Another reason sometimes given for viewing the SM and the SP as two different speeches is that they have two different audiences. John Welch seemed to think this was obvious: "The Lucan speech, of course, was delivered to a much larger audience than was the Sermon on the Mount, for 'a great multitude of people' had come out from all around the region, from Jewish and gentile cities, 'to hear him' (Luke 6:17)," whereas the Matthean SM was spoken to a "closer circle of disciples" (Welch 1999, 222; see also Welch 2009, 214). Welch contended that the material in the SP was restricted to "the more public elements" of Jesus' teaching, while the material found in the SM but not in the SP was advanced teaching that made the SM "the more sacred presentation" (Welch 2009, 215).

Matthew's introduction to the SM may seem to support the view that it was given only to the circle of the disciples: "Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them" (Matt. 5:1-2). However, Matthew makes it explicit in his concluding narrative comment that the crowds were also present and heard everything Jesus said on that occasion: "And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching" (7:28). The expression "the crowds" is the same in both texts (*hoi ochloi*). Thus, according to Matthew the SM was delivered publicly and was heard by the crowds that followed Jesus because he had been healing people of various diseases (4:23-25). To avoid this conclusion, Lange (1899, 100) was forced to claim that Matthew 7:28 refers to the SP, not the SM, even though Matthew makes no mention of a second speech and even though "these sayings" in 7:28 clearly refers to the sayings in the SM.

Grammatically, Matthew's statement that Jesus taught "them" (*autous*, Matt. 5:1) could refer to Jesus teaching "his disciples," "the crowds," or both. Obviously the disciples were not excluded, so Matthew must mean that either the disciples alone or both the crowds and the disciples were Jesus' intended audience. The best explanation is that Jesus' teaching was primarily directed to the disciples but was also presented for the crowds to hear and consider (Wilkins 1995, 149-50; Cousland 2002, 243). Jesus' audience thus consisted of an "inner circle" of already committed disciples and an "outer circle" of uncommitted listeners, some of whom may become disciples (Davies and Allison 1988, 422; Strecker 1988, 25; T. Howell 2011, 112;

similarly Lioy 2004, 93; Luz 2007, 182; Turner 2008, 149). A variation of this interpretation is that Jesus began by addressing the disciples but by Matthew 5:13 has broadened his intended audience to include the crowds (Kennedy 1984, 40-41).

Luke's account of the audience of the SP, though it uses its own distinctive wording, leads to the same conclusion (cf. Hagner 1993, 85). According to Luke, "a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people [*tou laou*]" (6:17) had followed Jesus. They had come "to hear him and to be healed of their diseases" (6:18), with "the crowd" getting as close as they could because they wanted "to touch him" in order to receive the healing power from his touch (6:19). Luke then introduces Jesus' discourse by saying, "And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said" (6:20a). As in Matthew 5:1-2, Luke's statement here does not specify the disciples as the sole audience or exclusive intended recipients of Jesus' teaching, but it does suggest that his teaching was primarily or especially for them—and for those who would join them as Jesus' disciples. Luke also comments at the end of the discourse that a broader group than the disciples had heard the entire discourse: "After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people [*tou laou*], he entered Capernaum" (Luke 7:1). The audience for the SP, then, consisted of the narrower circle of the disciples and the broader circle of a multitude of "the people" (6:17; 7:1).

A close examination of the narrative settings of the SM and the SP, then, shows that they are represented as having similar audiences. In both texts the speech is directed primarily to disciples but is spoken to a larger and broader audience that included crowds who had been attracted to Jesus by his healing ministry.

5.3.6   Jesus' Teaching Posture: Sitting or Standing?

Another difference between the SM and the SP that has been cited as indicating two different speeches concerns Jesus' bodily position or posture when speaking. Matthew 5:1 says that Jesus "sat down" and started to teach, while Luke 6:17 says that Jesus "stood." In combination with the other differences between the two passages, this difference in bodily posture is sometimes regarded as further evidence that Matthew and Luke were reporting two different speeches. This difference is correlated with the supposed different audiences: the SM could be

conveniently delivered to a small circle of disciples from a sitting position, while the SP, which was delivered in an open-air public meeting to a large crowd, necessitated Jesus standing in order to be heard.

It has just been shown, however, that the audience of the SP had the same composition as the audience of the SM: a mix of disciples and a multitude or crowd that included many non-disciples. The setting of a plateau or level place on the side of a hill would form a kind of amphitheatre, making it quite possible for Jesus to be heard by a large number of people gathered below and around him even while he was seated.

As for Luke 6:17, it does not state that Jesus gave the speech standing up. There is text intervening between verse 17 and the second half of 6:20 where the speech itself begins. In that intervening text, Luke states that the multitude "had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases" (v. 18). People with unclean spirits were cured (v. 18b); people with diseases sought to touch him because as they did power went out from him and healed them (v. 19). Evidently, then, Jesus came down to the plateau or level spot and stood there, casting out demons and healing people as they came forward to touch him, before he began to speak to the multitude. Nothing in the text of Luke precludes the possibility that after Jesus had healed the people who came to him for that purpose, he sat down to begin teaching.

The argument that two different events must be in view because Jesus is standing in one Gospel and sitting in another assumes without warrant that each Gospel is giving a complete account of Jesus' every movement. Such overly rigid demands on the text have often led to readers finding contradictions in Gospel narratives where none actually exists. A famous example involving the same apparent discrepancy is the question of whether the angel at Jesus' tomb was sitting or standing. According to Matthew, "the angel of the Lord" rolled away the stone and sat on it; this angel then told the women that Jesus was not there but had risen from the dead (Matt. 28:2, 5-6). According to Mark, the women "saw a young man sitting on the right side" who told them that Jesus was not there but had risen from the dead (Mark 16:5-6). Yet in Luke, while the women puzzled about Jesus' missing body, "two men stood by them" and told them that Jesus was not there but had risen from the dead (Luke 24:4-6). Here Luke obviously cannot be referring to a different event than the one in Matthew and Mark; yet Matthew and Mark say the angel (or

young man) was sitting while Luke says that the women saw two men who were standing. To allege a factual contradiction here is almost idle: what would prevent the angel (or two) from being seated until the women arrive, then standing to speak to them? (Likewise, what would prevent a second angel from appearing alongside a first, or preclude Matthew and Mark from mentioning only the angel that did the actual speaking?) Distinguishing the SM and the SP as two separate speeches on the basis of such a difference is similarly unjustified. As Bock pointed out, such incidental differences in the narratives may simply be due to "literary compression" (Bock 1994, 563), a form of simplification in which the narrator is not concerned to give an exhaustive or thorough account of everything that occurred.

5.3.7   Material in the Sermon on the Mount Not in the Sermon on the Plain

A common objection to viewing the SM and the SP as two accounts of the same historical speech is that the two discourses are markedly different in that only about one-fourth of the content of the SM is paralleled in the SP. The objection takes two forms. The first form of the objection simply notes the sheer quantity of material in the SM that is not found in the SP. This objection presupposes that if the two texts are accounts of the same speech then both accounts will be at least approximately the same in terms of how much of Jesus' speech is recorded. However, not only is there no reasonable basis for this assumption, but there is good evidence against it. The SP may be read aloud, with dramatic delivery, in no more than about five minutes; it seems *a priori* unlikely that this is a full record of Jesus' speech. For that matter, John Stott estimated that even the much longer SM might be delivered orally in about ten minutes (Stott 1978, 24), and Darrell Bock suggested it could be done in "around seven minutes" (Bock 1994, 935 n. 6).

Indeed, none of the speeches of Jesus in Luke is even half of the length of the SM. If one compares the five major discourses in Matthew with the parallel discourses in Mark and Luke, one finds that Matthew's discourses are consistently longer than those in the other two Gospels (cf. France 1998, 158; France 2007, 9). In every instance Matthew's discourse includes material parallel to the discourse in Luke with the same setting, other materials found in other contexts in Luke, and still more material found nowhere in Luke. Similar differences in length and content

apply to comparisons between discourses in Matthew and Mark or between Mark and Luke (see Table 19). In some instances Mark's discourse is longer than the parallel in Luke, in others Luke's discourse is longer than the parallel in Mark, but in every instance Matthew's discourse is considerably longer than the parallels in both Mark and Luke, with material found nowhere in either of them. This pattern decisively eliminates the argument that the SM and the SP cannot be reports of the same speech because of the amount of material missing from the SP.

Table 19. Matthew's Expansion and Combining of Discourses							
Discourse Topics	**Matthew**	*Vv.*		**Mark**	*Vv.*		**Luke**	*Vv.*
Beatitudes, love, prayer, anxiety	5-7	*107*		9:43-50	*8*		***6:20-49***	*30*
							11:2-13	*12*
							12:22-34	*13*
Commissioning	10:5-42	*38*		***6:7-13***	*7*		***9:3-5***	*3*
							10:3-12	*10*
							12:2-12	*11*
							12:51-53	*3*
Kingdom parables	13:3-52	*50*		***4:3-34***	*32*		***8:4-18***	*15*
							13:18-21	*4*
Stumbling, forgiveness	18:3-35	*33*		***9:35-48***	*14*		***17:1-4***	*4*
							15:4-7	*4*
Woes on Pharisees, temple's destruction, Son of Man's coming	23:2-39 24:4-25:46	*38* *95*		12:38-40 ***13:5-37***	*3* *33*		20:45-47 11:39-52 17:20-37 ***21:5-36***	*3* *14* *18* *32*
Note: Citations in bold italics are for discourses set in the same historical context as the corresponding discourses in Matthew.							

The second and more subtle form of the objection proposes a specific reason in the differing audiences of the SM and the SP that would account for the omissions from the SM in the SP. This argument comes from John Welch, who theorized that the SM included sacred, advanced teaching suitable only for committed disciples, while the SP was delivered to the general public and so omitted that sacred teaching. This difference explains why the SP lacks "the promises to see God or to be called the children of God," "the higher rules of covenant marriage," "the making of covenants by simple oaths," "fasting, washing, and anointing," "keeping the holy thing secret," and the like. It explains why in the SP Jesus replaced his command to be perfect (Matt. 5:48) with the less rigorous command to be merciful (Luke 6:36). According to Welch, Luke does report Jesus teaching on these subjects on other occasions, but always in private to his disciples (Welch 2009, 215).

As was shown above (§5.3.5), Jesus delivered the SM in the presence and hearing of the crowds (Matt. 7:28-29), so the premise of Welch's theory is false. Moreover, at least some of the material from the SM found in Luke outside the SP cannot be explained as material reserved only for private teaching of disciples. For example, Jesus' sayings in the SM about not putting a lamp under a basket (Matt. 5:15) and about the eye being the lamp of the body (Matt. 6:22-23) are found in Luke in a speech Jesus made to "the crowds" (Luke 11:29, 33-36). His saying about salt becoming worthless (Matt. 5:13) appears in another speech that Jesus made to "great crowds" who were following him around (Luke 14:25, 34-35). His statements that no one can serve both God and money (Matt. 6:24), that not one stroke of the Torah would pass away (Matt. 5:18), and that whoever divorces and remarries commits adultery (Matt. 5:32) were heard in Luke's account by Pharisees who were critical of him (Luke 16:13-14, 17-18). It is worth noting that in this passage Jesus' comments, though addressed to his disciples (Luke 16:1), were not spoken in private, because they were heard even by some of Jesus' harshest opponents. Matthew also reports Jesus *repeating* his saying about divorce and adultery in a public controversy with some Pharisees (19:3, 9). That is, what Welch characterized as "the higher rules of covenant marriage" meant only for disciples in sacred teaching, Matthew reports Jesus articulating in response to his critics. Similarly, Jesus' instruction to judge a tree by its fruit (Matt. 7:16-20) is repeated in Matthew in Jesus' response to the Pharisees' blasphemous claim that Jesus cast out demons by the power of the devil (Matt. 12:24, 33).

The theory that the differences between the SM and the SP are due to the sacred nature of the SM also does not account for some of the material in the SM that is found nowhere in Luke (or in any of the other Gospels). For example, it is difficult to see what would qualify the beatitudes about comfort for those who mourn and mercy for those who are merciful (Matt. 5:4, 7) as too sacred for public teaching. Jesus' statement that he did not come to abolish the Torah but to fulfil it (Matt. 5:17) would appear to be not "insider information" for disciples only but rather a preemptive response to criticism of Jesus' teaching. His condemnation of swearing oaths by heaven and of performing religious activities to be seen by other people appear in Matthew not only in the SM (Matt. 5:34; 6:1, 5, 16) but also in Jesus' woes directed to the Pharisees (Matt. 23:5, 22) and spoken before the multitudes as well

as the disciples (23:1). Here again, Matthew reports Jesus articulating publicly teaching that Welch characterized as sacred teachings for initiates (disciples) only.

Luke's placement of some of the SM sayings of Jesus in other contexts and his omission of other such sayings from his Gospel does not support the view that the SP represents a different speech than the SM. The two forms of this objection to viewing the SM and SP as two versions of the same speech are both fatally flawed.

5.3.8   Conclusion: Two Versions of the Same Speech

The SM and the SP, then, are similar in content, with the same beginning and conclusion and the same order of material; they are set in the same historical setting and geographical location; and they are presented as being spoken to the same audience. Clearly, the SM and the SP are two accounts or versions of the same speech. This is a conclusion that Raymond Brown, writing half a century ago, could announce had been accepted by most Catholic scholars (Brown 2010 [originally 1965], 338), and many evangelical scholars also take this position (e.g., Blomberg 1992, 96; Bock 1994, 935-36; Carson 2010, 154-55; Osborne 2010, 160, who notes that this is becoming the consensus view). Several Mormon scholars and leaders over the years have also drawn the same conclusion (Talmage 1982 [originally 1916], 215; McConkie 1965, 214; D. Ludlow 1982, 283; Cloward 1993, 123; Wayment 2005b, 374-76). The view that the SM and the SP are reports of two different speeches must be considered disproved. The theory that neither the SM nor the SP represents a specific speech given in Galilee on the occasion specified in Matthew and Luke (a view not entertained by LDS scholars defending the sermon in the Book of Mormon) is also unlikely, since Matthew and Luke's descriptions of the setting are verbally different enough (as the arguments for the two-speech view attest) that they are probably independent witnesses to the occurrence of such a speech. Of the four views of the relationship between the SM and the SP, two therefore remain: either the SM is an expanded version of the speech Jesus gave on that occasion in Galilee or that the SP is a condensed version of the speech.

5.4 Structure of the Sermon on the Mount

The relationship of the SM to the SP is an important issue for the present study of the SM in the Book of Mormon (the ST) because of the extreme similarity of

the ST to the SM. If to any significant extent the SM is the result of Matthean literary or compositional activity (or even pre-Matthean activity resulting in a Christian source produced after Jesus' resurrection), then any similarities of the ST to the results of such Christian handling of the material in the SM will call into question the authenticity of the ST. Such implications follow from the presumption that Jesus would not go to the American hemisphere and preach a sermon that reflected a later compositional arrangement or editorial shaping of his sayings by Matthew or any other Christians in the early church. For this reason, careful consideration of literary elements in the SM is an important undertaking for assessing the historical authenticity of the ST in the Book of Mormon.

The conclusion drawn in the preceding section is that the SM and the SP are two versions of the same speech or sermon, given by Jesus on a particular occasion during his early Galilean ministry. However, this conclusion still allows for the possibility that the SM, rather than the SP, preserves the original form and full contents of that historical Galilean speech. In this section and the two sections that follow, that hypothesis is examined and shown to be highly unlikely. A strong cumulative case will be made that the SM displays significant literary and editorial activity and choice on the part of the author of the Gospel of Matthew.

5.4.1   Structural Analysis of the Narrative Context of the Sermon on the Mount

As many commentators have observed, Matthew appears to have arranged much of the material in his Gospel thematically. In the previous chapter evidence was given for the now common analysis of the Gospel's structure as highlighting blocks of five major discourses alternating with narrative (see above, §4.8). In this section the narrative context around the SM will be examined in closer detail. This examination will lend support to the conclusion that Matthew has arranged Jesus' sayings into large thematically-based discourses.

In Matthew 4:23-25, the author gives a summary of the early healing and teaching ministry of Jesus in Galilee. He reports that Jesus taught, preached, healed people, and cast out demons. Yet up to this point, though he has mentioned Jesus' move from Judea to Nazareth and then to Capernaum (4:12-13), he has given no specific examples of his teaching, healing, and exorcism activities. Mark and Luke,

on the other hand, describe such activity in some detail for that period. One of those events Matthew does not mention at all, namely, the casting out of an unclean spirit from a man in the Capernaum synagogue (Mark 1:21-27; Luke 4:31-36). However, most of those events Matthew narrates only after the SM: the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14-16, cf. Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41), the cleansing of a leper (Matt. 8:2-4, cf. Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-14), and the sequence of the healing of the paralytic, the call of Matthew, and the discussion about fasting (Matt. 9:2-17, cf. Mark 2:1-22; Luke 5:18-39).

Whereas Matthew 5-7 gives a long discourse of Jesus' teaching, Matthew 8-9 consists mostly of narration of ten miracles: the leper, the centurion's boy, Peter's mother-in-law, the stilling of the storm, the Gadarene demoniacs, the paralytic, the bleeding woman and the little girl, the two blind men, and the demon-possessed man. The only pericopes in this section not about miracles are those concerning those not ready to become disciples (8:18-22), Jesus' association with tax-collectors including Matthew (9:9-13), and a discussion about fasting (9:14-17). The section concludes with another summary of Jesus' ministry worded much like the summary in 4:23 (9:35), followed by Jesus' comment about the need for workers to extend his ministry (9:36-37). The summaries in Matthew 4:23 and 9:35 have often been cited as an *inclusio* that frame the material in Matthew 5-9 as illustrative of Jesus' teaching and healing ministry. "The Sermon on the Mount then represents an extended commentary of the first part of Jesus' ministry, viz., his proclamation, while the succeeding narrative (chs. 8-9) represents an extended commentary of the second part of his ministry referred to in the summary statements, his acts of healing" (Baxter 2004, 30).

These features of Matthew's arrangement of material, along with the arrangement of material in the SM, have led many if not most commentators to the conclusion that Matthew has arranged these materials in blocks. Teaching material is gathered together into one large block in the SM, while miracle pericopes are gathered together into the large block in Matthew 8-9.

To put it another way, the following factors considered together appear to support this conclusion that the material in Matthew 5-10 has been arranged thematically in two large blocks:

(1) the differences between Matthew and the other two Synoptics in the placement of many of the miracle stories from Jesus' early Galilean ministry

(2) the clustering of Jesus' sayings or teachings in large discourses, such as the SM in Matthew 5-7 and the commissioning discourse in Matthew 10

(3) the clustering of miracle pericopes in Matthew 8-9 between the two great discourses of Matthew 5-7 and Matthew 10

(4) the fact that the units of discourse clustered together in the SM are scattered in several different discourses throughout Luke 6-16

Taken together, these facts suggest that the arrangement of material in these early chapters of Matthew is the result at least in part of the author deliberately bringing together into the same context materials of similar genre and theme that in earlier sources were probably distributed differently.

The likelihood of such an arrangement of teaching material in Matthew 5-7 and miracle stories in Matthew 8-9 is one piece of evidence supporting the hypothesis that the SM is an expanded version of the speech augmenting the speech with sayings and larger units of teaching material from other historical contexts.

5.4.2   Structure of the Sermon on the Mount in Light of the Sermon on the Plain

By all accounts, the SM exhibits a much greater degree of literary or rhetorical structure than the SP. This difference is not a matter of the comparative length of the SM, but of the degree to which the whole is structured compared to the whole of the SP.

A detailed analysis of the structure of the SM will be given in the rest of this section. The relative lack of structure of the SP—its rhetorical artlessness in terms of the way in which the material is ordered—is not disputed. Under the heading "Luke Gets Poor Marks for Organization," Richard Vinson quoted two noted NT scholars on this point (Vinson 2008, 172). According to Joseph Fitzmyer, "The Lucan sermon is loose and rambling" (Fitzmyer 1981, 628). George Kennedy was blunter still: "The structure of the speech is much less clear in Luke…. Luke 6 is not a very good speech" (Kennedy 1984, 65, 67). As Vinson put it more objectively, the SP "has few

indications of movement and structure" (Vinson 2008, 172). Hans Dieter Betz analysed the structure of the SP into three parts (Betz 1995, 66-70): an exordium consisting of the four beatitudes and four woes (Luke 6:20b-26), the body consisting of rules of conduct (6:27-45), and a peroration consisting of a brief warning and short parable (6:46-49). That is about as much as one can say regarding the rhetorical structure of the SP.

The comparative lack of literary or rhetorical structure in the SP need not be viewed as a criticism of the speech (as Kennedy's statement suggests). However, it is consistent with viewing the SP as closer to an informal oral speech than the SM, which as shall be shown in the rest of this section has marks of literary composition. If this comparison is correct, it would support the view commonly held among Gospel scholars that the SP was closer to the form of Jesus' historical sermon than the SM.

5.4.3   Structure of the Sermon on the Mount in Light of the Other Matthean Discourses

If Matthew has selected and arranged the units of Jesus' sayings in the SM in such a way as to impose his own literary structure on it, one would expect to see evidence that he has done this with some or all of the other major discourses in the Gospel, and with some similarities, at least, in the type of structural devices used. Such does appear to be in fact the case.

It has already been shown that Matthew's five major discourses generally correspond to consistently shorter discourses found in Mark and Luke. In each case Matthew's discourse includes material found in two, three, or even four different passages in Luke, and that Matthew's discourses always include a significant amount of material not found anywhere in either Mark or Luke (see Table 19 above, §5.3.7). The best explanation for this consistent pattern is that Matthew has combined for thematic and didactic purposes units of Jesus' sayings that earlier originated from different historical contexts.

An examination of the structures of the other Matthean discourses confirms that explanation. In each case, the discourse exhibits a formal structure or outline that is not evident in the corresponding passages in Mark and Luke. The point may be seen simply and clearly in the tables on the following two pages. No elaboration on these outlines is given here as the structural patterns they present are fairly

straightforward. As the outlines of the other four Matthean discourses in those tables indicate, Matthew regularly organizes the discourse units of Jesus' sayings into groupings of three. Since, as shall be shown in the sections that follow (§§5.4.4-5), the SM exhibits the same pattern of groupings of three, this evidence strongly supports, if not decisively proves, that the selection and arrangement of the material in the SM is due to some significant extent to the literary work of the Evangelist.

Table 20. Outline of Matthew's Second Major Discourse (Matt. 10:5-42)	
References	**Description**
10:5-10	***1. Basic Instructions***
10:5-6	Where to go: (1) not to Gentiles, (2) not to Samaritans, (3) to Israel
10:7-10	What to do: (1) preach, (2) heal, (3) don't collect money, etc.
10:11-15	Those who welcome you and those who do not
10:16-33	***2. Handling Persecution***
10:16-23	Be prepared for persecution from (1) the law, (2) family, and (3) all
10:24-31	Do not fear (stated three times, vv. 26, 28, 31)
10:32-33	Those who confess Christ and those who do not
10:34-42	***3. Be Faithful***
10:34-36	Christ will divide family members
10:37-39	"Not worthy of me" (stated three times, vv. 37-38)
10:40-42	Those who welcome you will be rewarded (stated three times)

Table 21. Outline of Matthew's Third Major Discourse (Matt. 13:3-52)	
References	**Description**
13:3-23	***Main Parable of the Word of the Kingdom***
13:3-9	The parable
13:10-17	Why Jesus spoke in parables
13:18-23	Parable of the sower explained
13:24-43	***Three Parables of the Growth of the Kingdom***
13:24-30	Parable of the tares
13:31-32	Parable of the mustard seed
13:33	Parable of the leaven
13:34-35	Why Jesus spoke in parables
13:36-43	Parable of the tares explained
13:44-50	***Three Parables of the Value of the Kingdom***
13:44	Parable of the treasure in the field
13:45-46	Parable of the pearl of great value
13:47-48	Parable of the dragnet
13:49-50	Parable of the dragnet explained
13:51-52	***Conclusion: The scribe who has become a disciple***

Table 22. Outline of Matthew's Fourth Major Discourse (Matt. 18:3-35)	
References	**Description**
18:3-14	***Disciples and the little ones***
18:3-6	Better to drown than to cause a little one to stumble
18:7-10	Better to lose a limb or an eye than to despise the little ones
18:12-14	Parable of the sheep: not one of the little ones should perish
18:15-20	***Disciples and the sinning brother***
18:15-17	Three steps for dealing with the sinning brother: (1) Go privately, (2) take two or three, and (3) tell it to the church
18:18-19	Bound or loosed on earth as in heaven
18:20	Wherever two or three gather in my name, I am there
18:21-35	***Disciples and the repentant brother***
18:21	How many times must I forgive him? Seven times?
18:22	Not seven, but seventy times seven
18:23-35	Parable of the unforgiving servant: so will the Father do to you

Table 23. Outline of Matthew's Fifth Major Discourse (Matt. 23:2-25:46)	
References	**Description**
23:2-36	***Judgment of the scribes and Pharisees***
23:2-12	General criticisms
23:13-28	Three pairs of woes Shutting the kingdom and proselytizing to hell (vv. 13, 15) Foolish oaths and hypocritical tithing (vv. 16-24) Cleaning dishes on outside, uncleanness inside (vv. 25-28)
23:29-36	Final woe: Murderers of the prophets avenged *in this generation*
23:37-24:34	***Judgment of Jerusalem and the Temple***
23:37-24:3	Announcement of the coming judgment Public announcement: your house is to be left desolate Private revelation: not one stone will be left on another Threefold question: when?
24:4-31	The Great Tribulation: Before the Great Tribulation (vv. 4-14) The Great Tribulation (vv. 15-28) After the Great Tribulation (vv. 29-31)
24:32-34	The judgment is coming *in this generation*
24:35-25:46	***Judgment on the Unfaithful***
24:35-36	Final Judgment will come, but when is not revealed
24:37-51	The coming of the Son of Man will be like… The days of Noah (vv. 37-41) A thief in the night (vv. 42-44) The master returning home (vv. 45-51)
25:1-46	Three parables of the Final Judgment (1) Wise and foolish virgins (vv. 1-13) (2) Faithful and unfaithful servants (vv. 14-30) (3) Sheep and goats (vv. 31-46)

Finally, a comparison of the contents of the SM with the contents of the last major discourse in Matthew reveals that the last discourse resumes many of the distinctive themes of the first discourse. In the previous chapter such a comparison was made to show that Matthew 23 should be included in that fifth major discourse (see Table 5 in §4.8). The comparison also provides further confirmation that the selection and arrangement of Jesus' sayings and discourse units in Matthew's major discourses are to a significant extent due to the literary work of the author. This conclusion rules out the notion that the SM was simply inserted whole by the Evangelist into the narrative.

5.4.4   Internal Indicators of Structure

Biblical scholars have discussed the structure of the SM long and hard without achieving consensus on the details of that structure. However, there is a consensus on the fact that the SM exhibits considerable rhetorical or literary structure or design, and some basic conclusions regarding the overall structure are widely accepted (Thom 2006, 291-92). Key examples will be considered here of relevance to showing that the structure and selection of materials in the SM are due at least in some significant measure to the literary work of the Evangelist.

5.4.4.1 The Form and Arrangement of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)

The Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12) follow what is in some respects a very simple and clear pattern. Each of the nine Beatitudes begins with the word *makarioi* ("Blessed") followed by a description of the persons who are being pronounced blessed, followed by a second clause that gives a description of the blessing that they receive. That there are nine Beatitudes is now well established on rhetorical grounds, despite confusion on the number throughout much of Christian history due to the length and different form of the ninth and the concluding sentence which has sometimes been taken as a tenth Beatitude (e.g., Betz 1995, 109; Welch 2009, 46-47). The analysis that follows, though not focused primarily on the number of Beatitudes, confirms that nine is the correct number (see also Hellholm 1994; Lioy 2004, 121; Talbert 2006, 49-50; Osborne 2010, 162-63).

The first eight Beatitudes speak of the blessed in the third person (5:3-10), while the final Beatitude is spoken in the second person ("Blessed are you," 5:11-12). The first and eighth Beatitudes both affirm that the recipients are blessed "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (5:3, 10). The six Beatitudes between those two express the blessings in the future tense, "for they shall be…" (5:4-9). The final Beatitude is much longer that the others and even consists of two sentences (5:11-12), leading some scholars to exclude those sayings from the Beatitudes (thus yielding eight total) and others to counting verses 11 and 12 as two Beatitudes (thus yielding ten total). However, comparative studies with ancient Jewish literature, especially 4Q525 (also called 4QBeatitudes) in the Dead Sea Scrolls, have shown that this variation is in keeping with the rhetorical style of beatitudes found in Jewish literature of the period (Daube 2000; Fitzmyer 2000, 114-16; Allison 2005, 175-77; Brooke 2005, 221-24).

On the other hand, in the case of the four beatitudes in Luke 6:20b-23, only the second and third follow the same form, and no statement of the nature of the blessing is repeated. It is generally recognized that it is more likely that Matthew (or his source) would have imposed greater formal regularity on the beatitudes than that Luke would have altered the sayings to disrupt that formal pattern.

Table 24. Three-Triad Analysis of the Matthean Beatitudes

Poor in spirit—kingdom of heaven (3)

    Mourn—comforted (4)

        Meek—inherit the earth (5)

Hunger and thirst for righteousness—satisfied (6)

    Merciful—obtain mercy (7)

        Pure in heart—see God (8)

Peacemakers—called sons of God (9)

    Persecuted for sake of righteousness—kingdom of heaven (10)

        Reviled and persecuted on account of Jesus—great reward in heaven (11-12)

Although different groupings of the Beatitudes have been proposed, two seem more plausible than the others. One of these is Allison's proposal that there are three triads of beatitudes (Table 24; see Allison 2005, 174-77). The first triad expresses the humble attitudes of the disciple (poor in spirit, mourn, and meek, vv. 3-5); the second triad expresses the godly desires of the disciple (hunger and thirst

for righteousness, merciful, and pure in heart, vv. 6-8); and the third triad expresses the enduring faith of the disciple under persecution (peacemakers, persecuted, reviled, vv. 9-12). Both the first and the third triads are pronouncements of divine reversal: those whom the world regards as losers will be the ultimate winners (vv. 3-5); those actually attacked for their relationship to Jesus will be more than compensated (vv. 9-12). The middle triad consists of pronouncements of the spiritual blessings that will secure these reversals (vv. 6-8). This analysis of the groupings of the Beatitudes works well in terms of their subject matter.

Table 25. Chiastic Analysis of the Matthean Beatitudes

A. Poor in spirit—<u>kingdom of heaven</u> (3)

    B. Mourn—comforted (*paraklēthēsontai*) (4)

        C. Meek—inherit the earth (direct object) (5)

            D. Hunger and thirst for righteousness—satisfied (*chortasthēsontai*) (6)

            D'. Merciful—obtain mercy (*eleēthēsontai*) (7)

        C'. Pure in heart—see God (direct object) (8)

    B'. Peacemakers—called (*klēthēsontai*) sons of God (9)

A'. Persecuted for sake of righteousness—<u>kingdom of heaven</u> (10)

You reviled and persecuted on account of Jesus—great reward in heaven (11-12)

The other proposal analyses the groupings or arrangement of the Beatitudes primarily in terms of form rather than content. This proposal with some variations has been advanced by several scholars (e.g., McEleney 1981, 12-13, though with unacceptable speculations about the origins of the Beatitudes; Talbert 2006, 49; T. Howell 2011, 218-24; Turner 2008, 145). The nine Beatitudes are grouped into two groups of four each and then the final, much longer Beatitude (see Table 25). In some versions of this analysis, the first four Beatitudes form the inward half of a chiasmus, the second group of four the outward half, and the ninth stands apart formally as a concluding Beatitude expanding on the last member of the chiasmus. The first four Beatitudes have 36 words, as do the second group of four Beatitudes, while the ninth Beatitude has 34 or 35 words (depending on whether one counts *pseudomenoi*). Verbal and formal comparisons of the Beatitudes strongly support the chiastic analysis: verses 3 and 10 have the only occurrences of "kingdom of heaven"; verses 4 and 9 use verbs that differ only in that one has two syllables at the beginning not found in the other (*paraklēthēsontai—klēthēsontai*); verses 5 and 8

are the only Beatitudes in which the future tense verb in the second line of the saying has a direct object ("earth," "God"); and verses 6 and 7 use verbs in their second lines that end in the same three syllables (*chortasthēsontai—eleēthēsontai*). It may be observed in passing that this chiastic analysis gives some literary support to the traditional order of verses 4 and 5 (McEleney 1981, 12; contra Di Lella 1989, 241-42), which is reversed in some ancient manuscripts (on the text-critical reasons for the traditional order, see Metzger 1994, 10).

Further confirmation of this 4—4—1 tripartite analysis of the Beatitudes comes from the use of alliteration in the Greek text (see T. Howell 2011, cited above). There is a great deal of alliteration in the Beatitudes, some of which is evident also in the Lukan version. Specifically, Luke's version uses six *p*-words— *ptōchoi*, *peinōntes*, *ponēron*, *polus*, *prophētais*, and *pateres* (Luke 6:20-23), all but the last of which are also found in Matthew's version. However, in Matthew there is alliteration using three different initial letters, and the alliterations cluster in and near the three groupings of the Beatitudes—with some overlap, so that the result is essentially seamless (see Table 26).

Table 26. Alliteration in the Matthean Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)			
	***P*-Words**	***D*-Words**	***K/CH*-Words**
First Group	*ptōchoi tō pneumati* (v. 3)		
	penthountes (v. 4a)		
	paraklēthēsontai (v. 4b)		
	praeis (v. 5)		*klēronomēsousin* (v. 5)
	peinōntes (v. 6)	*dipsōntes* (v. 6)	*chortasthēsontai* (v. 6)
		dikaiosunēn (v. 6)	
Second Group	*eleēmones…eleēthēsontai* (v. 7)		
			katharoi tē kardia (v. 8)
			klēthēsontai (v. 9)
		dediōgmenoi (v. 10)	
		dikaiosunēs (v. 10)	
Final Beatitude	*pan ponēron* (v. 11)	*diōxōsin* (v. 11)	
	polus (v. 12)		*chairete* (v. 12)
	prophēta…pro humōn (v. 12)		

The primary alliteration clearly involves *p*-words, as in Luke, though in Matthew there are eleven such *p*-words. These eleven *p*-words in the Matthean Beatitudes fit cleanly into the first set of four (vv. 3-6) and the final Beatitude (vv. 11-12). Then two other, secondary sets of alliteration (not found in Luke) bridge the gap between the first four Beatitudes and the final one. There are both *d*-words and *k/ch*-

words (the initial sounds in the latter set are virtually identical) that appear throughout verses 5-11. The only Beatitude lacking one of these three consonantal alliterations is verse 7, where the Greek uses a related adjective and verb (*eleēmones…eleēthēsontai*) resulting in a different kind of assonance. Only in the final Beatitude in verses 11-12 do all three sets of alliteration come together.

The evidently deliberate alliterations of the Beatitudes strongly support the view that they were grouped together and worded as they are *in Greek*. This does not mean that they are not authentic sayings of Jesus; nor does it mean, hypothetically possible though this is, that Jesus originally delivered them in Greek. Rather, it appears that Jesus' Aramaic sayings were translated into Greek, with alliteration influencing the choice of words (the addition of *pan* in Matthew 5:11, not found in the Lukan parallel beatitude, is an easy example). This likelihood adds some support to the common view that Matthew or his source added *tō pneumati* to *ptōchoi* in the first Beatitude and *dipsōntes* in the fourth Beatitude (both varying from the form of the parallel beatitudes in Luke). That Matthew is not solely responsible for all of the alliterations is shown from the *p*-group of alliterative words in the four Lukan beatitudes, as already noted above. Thus it appears that Matthew (or, less likely, his source) extended the alliteration both in the parallel beatitudes and by incorporating other sayings of Jesus worded in Greek with more alliterative elements.

5.4.4.2 The Structure of the Antitheses (Matthew 5:21-48)

The so-called antitheses (Matt. 5:21-48) exhibit a rhetorical structure not found in the SP or anywhere else in the Gospels (see Table 27). Each antithesis follows a three-fold structure. (1) It begins with a clause that includes the word *errethē* ("it was said"); this form of the verb is found in all six antitheses, nowhere else in the Gospels, and only four other times in the NT. All but one of these clauses also includes the words *ēkousate hoti* ("You have heard that"), an expression found nowhere else in the Synoptics and only in three other places in the NT. (2) Next comes a quotation from a statute in the Mosaic Law or Torah, in four cases augmented with words not in the Torah. These are the only explicit quotations from the OT in the SM; there are no explicit quotations from the OT in the SP. (3) Then

follows Jesus' contrasting comment introduced with the words *egō de legō humin* ("But I say to you"), a clause found in the NT only in these six occurrences.

Table 27. The Structure of the Antitheses (Matthew 5:21-48)			
Verses	**It Was Said (*errethē*)…**	**Quotation**	**But I Say to You… (*egō de legō humin*)**
21-26	*Ēkousate hoti errethē tois archaiois*	"You shall not murder" [Exod. 20:13]; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment	that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment…
27-30	*Ēkousate hoti errethē*	"You shall not commit adultery" [Exod. 20:14]	that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart….
31-32	*Errethē de*	Whoever divorces his wife, let him give "her a certificate of divorce" [Deut. 24:1]	that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery…
33-37	*Palin ēkousate hoti errethē tois archaiois*	"You shall not swear falsely" [Lev. 19:12], but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn	Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God…
38-42	*Ēkousate hoti errethē*	"An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" [Exod. 21:24]	Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also…
43-48	*Ēkousate hoti errethē*	"You shall love your neighbour" [Lev. 19:18] and hate your enemy	Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you…
Note: Quotations follow the ESV wording, but with quotation marks and bracketed OT references provided in the middle column.			

The six antitheses in Matthew 5:21-48 are clearly presented in two series of three each (cf. Allison 1999, 32; Allison 2005, 182-84; Talbert 2010, 81, 84). This is evident in two ways. (1) The first and fourth antitheses only give the fullest formulaic introduction, "You have heard that it was said"; the fourth prefaces the formula with the word *palin* ("again") to signal the repetition and so marks this verse as the beginning of a new series. (2) In the first set of three antitheses, the third part says *egō de legō humin hoti pas ho* ("but I say to you that everyone who…") and consists of a statement in the indicative warning that the person is guilty of sin even if he seems to have satisfied the letter of the Torah. (The article *ho*, usually translated "the" or left untranslated, in all three of these occurrences introduces a participle expressing what the sinner does.) In the second set of three antitheses, the word

hoti ("that") is omitted and instead of an indicative statement beginning with *pas ho* ("everyone who") the words that follow are an imperative, commanding behaviour that goes above and beyond what the scribes and Pharisees understood the Torah to require.

It is evident from a comparison of the antitheses with Luke 6:27-36 that the SP cannot be regarded simply as a shorter version or digest of the SM. The SP contains nothing from the first four antitheses, and the sayings it has that parallel sayings in the fifth and sixth antitheses are presented without that structure or framing (Luke 6:27-36). The opening words of that part of the SP, "But I say to you who hear" (*alla humin legō tois akousin*, 6:27) have only the words *humin legō* ("I say to you") in common with the formula found six times in the antitheses (even these in the reverse order); but this expression "I say to you" is extremely common in the Gospels, occurring some 141 times. Nor does the contrastive "but I say to you" have the same sense in Luke 6:27 as it does in the antitheses of the SM. In Luke 6:27a "but I say to you who hear" expresses a contrast between the behaviour of the disciples' enemies (v. 26) and the behaviour expected of the disciples toward their enemies (v. 27b-36).

5.4.4.3 Alms, Prayer, Fasting: The Structure and Sources of Matthew 6:1-18

Immediately following the antitheses, the SM presents another highly structured section with the theme of not practicing one's righteousness to be seen by other people (Matt. 6:1-18). Following an introductory theme statement (v. 1), the section divides into three units dealing with the topics of almsgiving (vv. 2-4), prayer (vv. 5-15), and fasting (vv. 16-18). Within this section, verses 7-15 develop the theme of prayer in a different way than in verses 5-6, which closely parallel the treatments of alms and fasting (see Table 28; cf. Betz 1985, 56-62; Allison 1999, 107-108; Allison 2005, 185-87).

The fact that verses 7-15, which include the Lord's Prayer (vv. 9-13), disrupt the tight structural organization of verses 2-6, 16-18 suggests that Matthew has brought together into this one context material that originated from two different contexts. This hypothesis receives strong confirmation from the different contexts in which Matthew and Luke present the Lord's Prayer. Matthew places the Lord's Prayer at the centre of the SM—at the exact centre, according to some analyses—

whereas in Luke it is part of Jesus' response to his disciples' request that he teach them how to pray, just as John the Baptist had taught his disciples (Luke 11:1). It is of course possible that Jesus repeated the Lord's Prayer on more than one occasion. However, if Jesus did so, it would seem likely that Luke was reporting the first such occasion, since in his narrative the prayer was given to his disciples in response to their request to be taught to pray. That is, presumably Jesus' disciples would not have asked Jesus to teach them to pray as John had taught his disciples if in fact Jesus had *already* taught them to pray and given them the Lord's Prayer. This means that either Luke 11 reports the first time Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer and Matthew 6 reports a subsequent teaching of the prayer, or Luke 11 and Matthew 6 are two different versions of the same teaching placed by the authors in different contexts. Two considerations support the latter conclusion.

Table 28. Alms, Prayer, and Fasting in Matthew 6		
Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people **in order to be seen by** them, for then you will have no **reward** from **your Father who is in heaven** (6:1)		
Alms (6:2-4)	**Prayer (6:5-6)**	**Fasting (6:16-18)**
[2] Thus, **when you** give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, **as the hypocrites** do *in the synagogues and in the streets*, **that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward**. [3] **But when you** give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, [4] so that your giving may be **in secret**. **And your Father who sees in secret will reward you**.	[5] **And when you** pray, you must not be **like the hypocrites**. For they love to stand and pray *in the synagogues and at the street corners*, **that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward**. [6] **But when you** pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to *your Father who is in secret*. **And your Father who sees in secret will reward you**.	[16] **And when you** fast, do not look gloomy **like the hypocrites**, for they disfigure their faces **that their** fasting **may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward**. [17] **But when you** fast, anoint your head and wash your face, [18] that your fasting may not be seen by others but by *your Father who is in secret*. **And your Father who sees in secret will reward you**.

First, the passage about Jesus' teaching on prayer in Luke includes not only the Lord's Prayer but also the unit of sayings about asking the Father in prayer that in Matthew appears later in the SM (Luke 11:9-13, cf. Matt. 7:7-11). The two units of the Lord's Prayer and of the sayings about asking the Father in prayer appear in

both passages and in the same order, with material intervening in both cases (Matt. 6:9-13; 7:7-11; Luke 11:2-4, 9-13).

Second, it is difficult chronologically to argue that the SM records a *later* teaching of the Lord's Prayer than Luke 11:1-13, even allowing for the possibility that Luke for thematic reasons has placed his account of Jesus' teaching about prayer to a later time than it took place historically. That is, it is difficult to argue that the pericope in Luke 11:1-13 belongs chronologically to a time *prior to* the SM/SP, since that sermon took place very soon after Jesus had chosen his inner circle of disciples. Yet if one takes Luke's narrative setting at all seriously, the Lord's Prayer was given at some time subsequent to the SP and in response to the disciples' request.

The difficulty of interpreting Matthew 6 and Luke 11 as reporting two historically separate teachings by Jesus of the prayer to his disciples is well illustrated by F. J. Botha's essay on the Lord's Prayer. Botha tried to account for the differences between the Matthean and Lukan versions of the prayer as the result of Jesus teaching the prayer on more than one occasion. Yet he admitted that it is unlikely that Luke 11 came before Matthew 6 in actual chronological time (Botha 1967, 46). He therefore laboured to explain why one of the disciples would ask Jesus how to pray (Luke 11) after Jesus had already given the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6). Perhaps, Botha suggested, the disciple was not one of the twelve, or perhaps he was asking Jesus to repeat the prayer or to teach them another prayer (Botha 1967, 46). The *ad hoc* quality of all these suggestions and the contextual strain of the second and third is enough to disqualify them.

Thus, the best explanation of the textual evidence is that Matthew has inserted the Lord's Prayer into the SM because it fit thematically with Jesus' teaching on not praying like hypocrites, which appears to have derived from another source. This explanation accounts for the complete omission of this part of the SM (Matt. 6:1-18) from the SP in Luke 6, for the way the passage about the Lord's Prayer disrupts the tight structure of the three units about alms, prayer, and fasting (Matt. 6:2-6, 16-18), and for the different contexts of the two units about prayer that are paralleled in the SM (Matt. 6:9-15; 7:7-11) and later in Luke (11:2-4, 9-13).

5.4.4.4 The Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17; 7:12)

One of the most widely recognized indications of literary structure in the SM is the use of two sayings referring to the Law and the Prophets to open and conclude the body of the sermon:

> Do not think that I have come to abolish **the Law or the Prophets**; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (Matt. 5:17)

> So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is **the Law and the Prophets**. (Matt. 7:12)

According to most analyses of the SM (see the review in Talbert 2006, 21-25), its content falls into three parts: an introduction (5:3-16), the body (5:17-7:12), and the conclusion (7:13-27). Since Matthew 5:17-20 indisputably functions to establish the principles by which the antitheses (5:21-48) are to be understood, Matthew 5:17 has a clear claim to mark the beginning of the body of the sermon. Matthew 7:13-27 presents a series of contrasts between the "two ways" (see below, §5.5.4.5) and so clearly represents a separate and concluding section of the sermon. This means that 7:12 is the last statement in the body of the sermon, as almost all studies agree (Scott and Dean 1996, 362 n. 98, acknowledged their view to be an exception). Further confirmation of these structural divisions is the fact that Matthew 5:17 and 7:12 are the only two references in the SM to the Law and the Prophets (5:17 using the conjunction "or" for grammatical consistency in the context in which Jesus denies coming to abolish the Scriptures). Thus, most studies of the SM agree that these two references to the Law and the Prophets in 5:17 and 7:12 form an *inclusio* that marks the beginning and conclusion of the body of the sermon and that express the sermon's theme that the kingdom Jesus announces fulfills the Scriptures (e.g., Syreeni 1987, 173-78; Lioy 2004, 94; Allison 2005, 194-95).

The SP in Luke does not refer to "the Law and the Prophets," and in fact does not use the word "law" (*nomos*) at all, even though Luke does refer to "the Law and the Prophets" once elsewhere (Luke 16:16; see also 24:44). There is no parallel in the SP or elsewhere in Luke to Matthew 5:17, nor to 5:19-20, though 5:18 is paralleled in Luke 16:17, the saying adjacent to Luke's only reference to "the Law and the Prophets." The Golden Rule saying in Matthew 7:12 is paralleled in the SP, but without the comment "for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Luke 6:31). This comment is very similar to the one Jesus makes in Matthew when discussing the two

love commands (Matt. 22:40), a comment not found in the parallel Gospel accounts (cf. Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28). Furthermore, the Golden Rule is the one saying found in both the SM and the SP that stands in a different location in each: in the SP it is sandwiched in the midst of the sayings about turning the other cheek and loving one's enemies that are found in Matthew 5:38-48 (see Table 16, §5.2.2).

The best explanation for these facts is that Matthew has arranged and worded the material in the SM so that the body of the sermon is framed by the two sayings concerning the Law and the Prophets (5:17; 7:12). It is plausible and even likely that Matthew added the words "for this is the Law and the Prophets" to Jesus' Golden Rule and placed it where he did so as to create this *inclusio* (so also Nicol 1977, 83; Syreeni 2005, 100-101; and many others; see below, §7.6.4).

5.4.4.5 The Two Ways (Matthew 7:13-27)

Matthew 7:13-27 concludes the SM with a series of three units of material (Allison 2005, 179-80) drawing sharp contrasts between the "two ways"—the narrow and broad way (7:13-14), false and true disciples (7:15-23), and the houses built on rock and sand (7:24-27). The middle section itself has three natural parts: the analogy comparing false prophets to wolves in sheep's clothing (7:15), the analogy of testing a tree by whether it has good fruit or bad fruit (7:15-20), and the contrast between those who do the Father's will and those who boast of prophesying in the Lord's name (7:21-23). There is no parallel in the SP to the first of these three units, partial parallels in the SP to the middle (Luke 6:43-46), and a complete parallel to the fourth unit (6:47-49). The first unit has a partial parallel elsewhere in Luke (13:24, 27). In the case of the second unit, the SP is only partially parallel: it lacks any reference to false prophets claiming to speak in Christ's name, has only a brief saying about false disciples in the form of a rhetorical question (Luke 6:46), and lacks the balancing reference to true disciples as those who do the Father's will (cf. Matt. 7:21).

A close examination of the passage shows that it is structured in a well-formed chiasmus (see Table 29). As is the case with the other discourse sections of the SM examined above, this structure is not evident in the partially parallel section of the SP.

Table 29. Chiasmus in Matthew 7:13-27
Narrow way v. broad way (vv. 13-14)
False prophets: sheep in wolves' clothing (v. 15)
You will know them by their fruits (v. 16a)
No grapes from thorns or figs from thistles (v. 16b)
Good trees bear good fruit, bad trees bad fruit (v. 17)
Good trees can't bear bad fruit nor bad trees good fruit (v. 18)
Every tree that doesn't bear good fruit is cut down and burned (v. 19)
So then, you will know them by their fruits (v. 20)
Many will claim to prophesy in my name but not do the Father's will (vv. 21-23)
House on the rock v. house on the sand (vv. 24-27)

The best explanation for these facts is that Matthew has filled out the concluding material in Jesus' sermon with other sayings of Jesus originally spoken in other contexts in order to bring together material around the theme of the two ways in a tightly structured literary unit.

5.4.5   Structural Patterns in the Sermon on the Mount

A noticeable structural pattern in many of the passages in the SM analysed above is the use of triads or threes. As shown earlier (§5.4.3), all of the other major discourses in Matthew also make heavy use of triadic structures. In each of those discourses, the triadic patterns identified generally do not appear in the parallel discourses in Mark or Luke, which are also invariably shorter than the discourses in Matthew. Thus, the consistent use of triadic structures throughout all of the major discourses in Matthew is hardly explainable on any other hypothesis than that Matthew has gathered together and arranged the sayings units in his major discourses so as to form these triadic patterns (cf. Davies and Allison 1988, 66).

One need not resolve all of the debated questions concerning the details of the structure of the SM to appreciate the force of this evidence. Debate continues concerning precisely how to outline the sermon as a whole (though a broad consensus exists regarding the major turning points or divisions) as well as how to analyse the smaller units of discourse at the most detailed levels. Nor is it necessary to argue for a comprehensively "triadic" analysis of the SM at every level (as is done artificially in Stassen 2003; cf. the critique in Thom 2006). On the other side, it

should not be supposed that Matthew is responsible for *all* of the triads in the SM (Matt. 7:7-8 is an obvious example, cf. Luke 11:9-10). As Allison pointed out, there are many examples of triads in Mark and Luke (Allison 2005, 199-201). However, most of the triads in the arrangement of Jesus' sayings and discourse units in the SM are unique to Matthew, and a comparison of these triads with the parallel passages in Luke shows that Matthew is responsible for at least many of these triads. This finding is consistent with the fact, shown in the previous chapter, that the author of the Gospel of Matthew has made extensive, distinctive use of triads throughout the Gospel in both narrative and sayings material (see §4.8, and especially Table 7 there for a list of triads outside the SM that are unique to Matthew). The following list of triads in the SM, each of which is unique to the Gospel of Matthew, is indicative of the Evangelist's hand:

- Three groups of beatitudes in 4—4—1 pattern (5:3-12; cf. Luke 6:20b-23)
- Insult you, persecute you, say false things against you (5:11; cf. the four elements in Luke 6:22)
- Kingdom of heaven (three times, 5:19-20)
- Tripartite structure of each antithesis: "it was said," quotation, "but I say to you" (5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43)
- Two groups of three antitheses (5:21-32, 33-48)
- The triads angry—*raca*—fool and judgment—council—hell fire (5:22)
- Parallel arrangement of the sayings in the three units on alms, prayer, and fasting: "When you… don't as the hypocrites… to be seen/praised by others; they have their reward… your Father who sees in secret will repay you" (6:1-6, 16-18)
- Three "you" petitions followed by three "we" petitions in the Lord's Prayer (6:9-13; cf. two "you" and three "we" petitions in Luke 11:2-4)
- The birds do not sow, reap, or gather into barns (6:26; cf. Luke 12:24)
- What you will eat, what you will drink, what you will wear (6:25, 31; cf. Luke 12:22, 29)
- The Gentiles seek *all* these things…the Father knows you need them *all*…and *all* these things shall be added to you (6:32-33; cf. one "all" in Luke 12:30-31)

- Three rhetorical questions about the Father's response to petitionary prayer (7:9-11; cf. four rhetorical questions in Luke 11:11-13)

- Wide v. narrow paths, false v. true disciples, sand v. rock (7:12-27)

- Did we not in your name prophesy, cast out demons, and perform many works? (7:22; cf. Luke 13:26)

- The rains fell, the floods came, and the winds blew (7:25, 27; cf. Luke 6:48-49)

The best explanation for the presence of so many triads in the SM that are unique to Matthew's Gospel even in most of the places where Luke has parallel sayings is that Matthew has imposed triadic structures on the material.

5.4.6   Structure of the Sermon on the Mount as Indicative of Matthean Composition

Enough has been said here to demonstrate that the SM exhibits an artistic, highly literate structure deriving almost certainly from the Evangelist. The sayings are from Jesus, and many of the groupings or discourse units of sayings most likely originated from Jesus as well. However, the author of the Gospel was clearly responsible for the selection of which units to include and the arrangement of those units and other sayings in the discourse. This conclusion has been supported from the overall structure of the Gospel as a whole (large discourses alternating with narrative sections), from the relative lack of rhetorical structure in the SP as compared to the SM, from a comparison of the other Matthean discourses with their counterparts in Mark and Luke, from analyses of the internal structure of the other Matthean discourses, and from analyses of the content and structure of specific units and passages within the SM and comparisons of those units and passages with their counterparts in Luke.

As was shown earlier in this chapter (see the conclusion on this point in §5.3.8), the SM and the SP are almost certainly two different versions of the same historical speech or sermon on Jesus. This left the question of whether that historical sermon was more like the SM, in which case the SP would have been a digest or abbreviated account of the sermon, or more like the SP, in which case the SM would have been an expanded account of the sermon. It should be noted that either hypothesis allows for *some* editing of the sermon by both authors; the question here

is simply whether the historical sermon was closer in content and shape to the SM or the SP.

The totality of the evidence reviewed here warrants the conclusion that it is extremely unlikely that the SP was a shortened or truncated revision of the sermon as represented by the SM. Rather, it is highly probable that the SM was Matthew's expansion of the historical sermon, which would have been closer to what is presented as the SP in Luke. As Martin Hengel put it, "one could make a Sermon on the Mount out of the Sermon on the Plain, but not vice versa" (Hengel 2000, 176-77). Again, the view taken here is that Matthew expanded the SM not by attributing to Jesus things he did not say but by augmenting the material in Jesus' historical sermon from other units of sayings derived from Jesus' preaching and teaching on other occasions. Matthew's "composition" involves selection, arrangement, and in many places precise wording, but not the creation of whole sayings of Jesus.

While Jesus undoubtedly said many things on two or more occasions, specific details concerning the occasions mentioned in the Gospels (e.g., Luke's narrative context for the giving of the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11:2-4), the literary artistry of Matthew's presentation of Jesus' sayings in the SM as compared to the SP in Luke (e.g., the chiasmus in Matthew 7:13-27), and other such features discussed here simply cannot be plausibly explained by multiple occasions for Jesus' sayings. Far and away the best explanation for the textual facts is that the selection and arrangement of materials in the SM are in large measure the work of the Evangelist.

5.5 Source and Redaction Criticism of the Sermon on the Mount

The author of the Gospel of Matthew made his selection and arrangement of Jesus' sayings in the SM by utilizing whatever sources were available to him. His expansion of the historical sermon preached by Jesus on the occasion indicated in the Gospel narrative appears to have drawn on one or more sources through which Jesus' sayings were mediated, even if, as is plausible, the author was himself an eyewitness of Jesus' teaching and so one of those sources (see §4.11). The extent to which the Evangelist was responsible for the selection, arrangement, and wording of the material in the SM is of direct relevance to the problem addressed in this study, since it is obviously implausible in the extreme that Jesus would preach a

sermon to the Nephites that corresponded with the specific editorial form and content of Jesus' Galilean sermon that the Evangelist would produce some decades later. The finding of the preceding sections of this chapter is that Matthew's SM is an edited and expanded version of Jesus' sermon arranged thematically to incorporate discourse units and sayings originating at other times in Jesus' ministry. This finding poses a serious difficulty for the traditional Mormon view that the ST, which so closely mirrors the SM, was an authentic historical sermon preached by Jesus to the Nephites.

Yet there is more to be said. In this section, the issue of the sources used by the Evangelist in the composition of the SM will be examined (in what is commonly called *source criticism*) as well as evidence that the selection and wording of the sayings in the SM reflect authorial emphases and perspectives (in what is commonly called *redaction criticism*). The evidence considered in this section will demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that the Evangelist is in some considerable measure responsible for the precise arrangement and wording of the sayings of Jesus in the SM.

5.5.1   The Conventional View: Q and M as the Sources of the Sermon

The conventional, dominant theory concerning the relationships among the Synoptic Gospels was treated at length in the previous chapter (§4.9). The conclusion drawn there was that some version of that conventional view is likely to be correct. The theory has two main elements. (1) Mark was the first of the Synoptic Gospels to be written and was used as a source by both Matthew and Luke (a view known as *Markan priority*). (2) Most or all of the material that is found in both Matthew and Luke but not in Mark derived from another source that is not extant; this source was more likely a written text, though it may have been a distinct body oral traditions. The hypothetical written source behind the material common to Matthew and Luke but not Mark is known in biblical scholarship as *Q*. The model of Synoptic origins that accepts both Markan priority and Q (or something like Q) is known as the *two-source theory*.

The findings of this chapter so far are consistent with the two-source theory. According to that model, the discourse units that are found in both the SM and the SP derive from Q. This common source explains the similarities in the contents of

the SM and the SP as well as the fact that each Gospel places the sermon at the same time and place. The differences between the SM and the SP have various explanations, the most basic of which involve decisions made by each author as to which materials to use from Q, how to arrange those materials within the narrative of their books, and what changes in wording to make to individual sayings in keeping with their literary style, thematic considerations, readers' understanding, and so forth. Other factors might also have contributed to the differences. For example, presumably if Matthew and Luke used a common written source called Q they had access to two different manuscripts or copies of Q, and perhaps even to two different editions of Q. As pointed out in the discussion concerning Q in the previous chapter, however, definite conclusions regarding differing editions of Q are not possible given the hypothetical and less than certain nature of the Q source itself (§4.9.4).

The finding that Matthew has expanded the sermon with materials deriving from other contexts in Jesus' teaching fits extremely well with the two-source theory. On this understanding, the historical sermon preached by Jesus in Galilee was closer in content, shape, and wording to the SP than to the SM. This does not mean that the SP is an exact transcript of the sermon (being in Greek, it almost certainly is not) or that Matthew's text is never closer to the original wording than Luke's. Those sorts of judgments can only be made on a case-by-case basis and will range in confidence levels from possible to highly probable. Rather, the conclusion is that the SP is *closer* in general contents, shape, and wording to the historical sermon than the SM. This conclusion coheres with the two-source theory nicely, because that theory explains better than any other how it is that Matthew and Luke have so much material in common with each other in their two respective sermons and yet those two Gospels present that common material in such different ways. Thus the fact that the SM and the SP are so similar, yet the SM appears to be an expansion of a text that was rather more like the SP, is well explained by the two-source theory.

If something like the two-source theory is correct, Matthew chose to augment the sermon as it came from Q with other discourse units and sayings of Jesus. Some of these materials originated from other parts of Q, as they also appear in Luke but in other narrative settings. Other discourse units and sayings of Jesus in the SM that have no parallel anywhere in Luke were taken from yet another source

or sources that are not extant. Scholars designate this material unique to the Gospel of Matthew, whether in the SM or anywhere else in the Gospel, as *M*. The use of the cipher M for Matthew's unique material in no way limits it to one written source or one source of any kind. It may have included both written and oral sources. Nevertheless, there are certain commonalities of perspective, emphasis, and theme that appear in the "M" material, suggesting at the very least that the Evangelist brought this material into his Gospel because of its importance to his overall project. A simple overview of the material in the SM unique to Matthew will illustrate the point:

- Beatitudes on the gentle, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted (5:4-5, 7-10)
- Light of the world, city on a hill…let your light so shine (5:14, 16)
- Not to abolish the Law but to fulfil it (5:17)
- Your righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees (5:19-20)
- Anger against a brother is enough of a violation of the Torah to merit hell (5:21-24)
- Lusting after a woman in one's heart is tantamount to violating the Torah's prohibition of adultery (5:27-28)
- Don't swear by this or that; just tell the truth (5:33-37)
- You have heard, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth (5:38)
- Whoever forces you to go one mile, go two (5:41)
- Give alms in secret; pray in secret (6:1-8)
- If you don't forgive others, the Father will not forgive you (6:15)
- Don't give holy things to dogs or throw pearls before swine (7:6)
- Enter by the narrow gate; the broad way leads to destruction (7:13)
- Beware of false prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing (7:15)
- Many will claim to do miracles in Christ's name (7:22)

Certain themes or concerns stand out in this material, especially showing forgiveness and mercy to others, fidelity to the Torah, and righteousness as an interior matter of the heart. The two-source theory suggests that these emphases in the SM reflect the Evangelist's selection of material from his unique source or sources to augment the material drawn from the Q source.

5.5.2   Betz on the Sermon on the Mount as a Pre-Matthean Text

LDS scholar John Welch admitted that "it seems unlikely for a person to believe that the resurrected Jesus delivered the sermon to the Nephites recorded in 3 Nephi 11-18 within a year after his crucifixion and at the same time to hold that the evangelist gave the Sermon its basic form and selected its content" (Welch 1999, 213). To nullify this obvious objection to the authenticity of the ST, Welch disputed that Matthew is in any sense the author of the SM (on Welch's view of the Synoptic problem, see §4.9.5).

As an alternative to the conventional view of the sources of the SM, Welch has repeatedly cited Hans Dieter Betz's view that the SM is a "pre-Matthean text" (Welch 1990, 168-69; Welch 1999, 215-16; Welch 2009, 211-12). In his book on the ST, Welch asserted that according to Betz the SM "was a composite of pre-Matthean sources, embodying a set of cultic instructions that served the earliest Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem as an epitome of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which Matthew later incorporated into his Gospel" (Welch 1999, 215). In his more recent book on the SM, Welch cited Betz in support of his position that the SM was "written at an early time when Jesus and his followers were still hoping for a restoration, reform, and rejuvenation of the Temple, not its destruction or obsolescence" (Welch 2009, 211). In short, Welch has cited Betz as giving some credence to the idea that the SM was written while Jesus was still living on the earth. Thus Welch theorized that "Jesus regularly used the Sermon on the Mount (or something like it) in instructing initiates and guiding them through the stages of induction into the full ranks of discipleship" (ibid., 211-12).

A careful review of Betz's writings on the subject shows that his theory of the SM as a pre-Matthean composition does not support Welch's position. Betz's theory is "that the Matthean SM is a source that has been transmitted intact and integrated by the evangelist into the composition of his Gospel. But this source does not simply derive from the historical Jesus, in the sense that Jesus is the author of all the sayings in their present form and context. Rather, the SM represents a pre-Matthean composition of a redactional nature" (Betz 1985, 18-19). More specifically, "the SM belongs to early Jewish Christianity, a product of the mid-first century, when the Jewish-Christian community was still part of Judaism" (19). Betz suggested that "there may have been several" authors of the SM (90). "Undoubtedly, many sayings

in the SM go back in one form or another to the historical Jesus. But there are also sayings, and even entire compositions, for which there are no synoptic parallels, and whose derivation from Jesus cannot, therefore, be established" (91).

Betz classified the SM as an "epitome" of Jesus' teaching. His model example of an epitome is Epicurus's *Kyriai Doxai*, which was a prototype for Arrianus's *Enchiridion*, a compilation of the sayings of Epictetus (Betz 1985, 10-11). An epitome was a literary work that condenses a larger body of teaching to a manageable, brief summation. As such, "the epitome is secondary in nature. It is a condensation of a larger work, made by a redactor" (13). "In composing the epitome, the author has considerable freedom to be creative, to reformulate, to transpose, to add and omit as necessary in view of the overall demands of the genre and purpose" (13). Betz's hypothesis was that "the literary genre of the SM is that of an epitome presenting the theology of Jesus in a systematic fashion. The epitome is a composition carefully designed out of sayings of Jesus grouped according to thematic points of doctrine considered to be of primary importance" (15).

So then, Betz viewed the SM as a composition in which Jesus' sayings were arranged, reformulated, and augmented by one or more Jewish-Christian authors a couple of decades after Jesus' crucifixion. Moreover, Betz's view of the SM is simply a variant form of the conventional theory that the SM and other materials in Matthew and Luke derived from Q. According to Betz, Matthew's SM derived from one version of Q (Q^{Matt}) while Luke's SP derived from another version (Q^{Luke}). The SM in Q^{Matt} and the SP in Q^{Luke} each derived from an earlier Q that in turn was composed using oral traditions of the sayings of Jesus (Betz 1995, 7-9, 42-44). The SM was produced "to instruct converts from Judaism" while the SP was created "the instruct those coming from a Greek background" (Betz 1995, 88). Thus, even though Betz denied that Matthew had redacted the SM, in his view the SM went through several distinct stages of development after Jesus before reaching Matthew: oral tradition, a proto-Q, diverging versions of Q, and finally the SM (see Gundry 2005, 129-30).

As has already been mentioned, Betz was actually quite sceptical about much of the contents of the SM originating as actual sayings of the historical Jesus. For example, Betz stated that "our verdict in general must be that the passage 6:1-18 (with the possible exception of the Lord's Prayer) cannot be attributed to Jesus" (Betz 1985, 67). In his estimation, "a form of Jewish Christianity comes to expression

here [in the SM] that *shows no interest in the temple cult* and is probably anti-Pharisaic in tendency" (69, emphasis added). Welch missed this aspect of Betz's studies when he cited this essay by Betz and claimed, "A previous, solemn ritual use of the Sermon of the Mount among the early disciples would help to explain its respectful presentation by Matthew as a single block of text, strengthening several conclusions advanced by Betz and others that the Sermon on the Mount is in some ways un-Matthean and in most ways pre-Matthean, and in no case inconsistent with the characteristics of the *ipsissima vox* of Jesus" (Welch 2009, 211). The only part of this complex statement that agrees with Betz is that the SM is pre-Matthean and even in parts un-Matthean. Betz did not view the SM as a ritual, temple text, and he regarded much of it not only as not by Matthew but also as not by Jesus.

Welch claimed that Betz's view represented a "trend in recent years…toward seeing somewhat less Matthean influence in the composition of the Sermon on the Mount itself" (Welch 1999, 215). In fact the trend in contemporary biblical scholarship both before and after Welch's statement has been toward recognizing and describing the role of the Evangelist in the composition of the SM. Betz's theory is actually something of an outlier in Matthean studies. As Graham Stanton commented in 1987, "Betz's hypothesis…either challenges or ignores almost all other current scholarly work on the SM" (Stanton 1987, 182). That judgment remains as valid now as it was then.

Robert Gundry is fairly typical of scholarly responses to Betz's view: "Betz has buried Matthew and Luke as authors and resurrected them as scissors-and-paste copyists, and makes no bones about having done so" (Gundry 2005, 130). One of Betz's reasons for claiming that Matthew did not redact the SM is that supposedly Matthew left various tensions or conflicts between the SM and the rest of the Gospel (132). Gundry did a good job overall responding to these various supposed inconsistencies, though he went unnecessarily too far to the other extreme (as many other scholars do as well) in assigning some whole sayings in the SM, such as Matthew 5:5, to Matthean composition (132-43).

Betz's characterization of the genre of the SM as an "epitome" of Jesus' teaching has also been subjected to helpful critique. For example, Stanton pointed out that the SM is not representative of Jesus' teaching as a whole and exhibits a careful literary structure, whereas ancient epitomes such as the *Kyriai Doxai*

provided a generally unstructured collection representative of the philosopher's teachings (Stanton 1987, 183).

In sum, Betz's theory of the origins of the SM (1) is incompatible with Welch's position, since it views the SM as originating from a version of Q coming at the end of a multi-stage process of development after Jesus, (2) is rejected by most NT scholars, and (3) is shown by various considerations to be quite unlikely. Betz's view is slightly closer to that of LDS writer Don Sorenson, who speculated that Q might have included the SM in the same form as it appears in Matthew (D. Sorenson 2004, 121). However, this suggestion is extremely implausible in view of the fact that the SM and the SP are two different versions of the same historical speech by Jesus in Galilee.

5.5.3   James and the Sermon on the Mount

Welch sought to strengthen his case for viewing the SM as a pre-Matthean text by drawing comparisons between the SM and other parts of the NT, especially James and Paul. With regard to the former, Welch argued that various "verbal and conceptual similarities" between the SM and the epistle of James, which he assumed was one of the earliest NT books, showed that "something like the Sermon on the Mount was already considered authoritative, whether oral or written" when James wrote (Welch 1999, 224, 225). "One must ask how a totally new sermon of Jesus, compiled and advanced by Matthew, would ever have been accepted" (225).

It is certainly true that close thematic connections have often been noted between James and the SM (e.g., Shepherd 1956; Hartin 1989, 1991, 1996; Deppe 1990, 92-117, 123-51, 161-83, 202-57; V. Porter 2005; Sandt and Zangenberg 2008). Virgil Porter, for example, has documented 45 parallel statements between the SM and James (V. Porter 2005, 347-52), and his table misses some notable ones. The following are probably the most striking parallels to the SM in James:

- "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds" (James 1:2a, cf. Matt. 5:11-12).
- "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5, cf. Matt. 7:7-8).
- "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who

looks intently at his natural face in a mirror" (James 1:22-24; cf. Matt. 7:24-27).

- "For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy" (James 2:13; cf. Matt. 6:14-15).

- "The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell [*Gehenna*]" (James 3:6; cf. Matt. 5:22, 29-30).

- "Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs?" (James 3:12; cf. Matt. 7:16b).

- "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4; cf. Matt. 6:24).

- "Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days" (James 5:2-3, cf. Matt. 6:19-20).

- "But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your 'yes' be yes and your 'no' be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation" (James 5:12, cf. Matt. 5:34, 37).

One set of parallels that Porter missed comes in James 3:17-18, which probably alludes to five of the beatitudes (Matt. 5:5-9; see Table 30).

Table 30. Allusions to the Beatitudes in James 3:17-18	
James 3:17-18 (NKJV)	Matthew 5:3-9
But the wisdom that is from above is first **pure**, then **peaceable**, **gentle**, willing to yield, **full of mercy** and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of **righteousness** is sown in peace by **those who make peace**.	the **pure** in heart (v. 8) the **peacemakers** (v. 9) the **gentle** (v. 5) the **merciful** (v. 7) for **righteousness** (v. 6) **the peacemakers** (v. 9)

Despite these many parallels between the SM and James, the evidence is insufficient to show that James had knowledge of the SM in something close to its Matthean form. The following considerations actually count against the view that James knew the SM in something like the version found in Matthew:

1. Some of the material in James is closer to sayings in Luke's SP than to sayings in the SM. For example, James refers in the plural to "the poor" (James 2:3; cf. the singular in 2:2, 5, 6), as does the SP at Luke 6:20, whereas Matthew 5:3 refers to "the poor in spirit." James's statement to the proud, "Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom" (James 4:9b), recalls Jesus' words in the SP, "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep" (Luke 6:25b; cf. Matt. 5:4). While James 5:2-3 echoes Matthew 6:19-20 as noted above, James's warning, "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you" (5:1) echoes Jesus' warning in the SP, "But woe to you who are rich" (Luke 6:24), which has no parallel in the SM (see also James 1:10-11). It is therefore more likely that Matthew, James, and Luke are all drawing on common or similar sources of Jesus' teaching than that James was drawing on the SM or something close to it.

2. The allusions to the SM in James do not appear in James in an order corresponding to the sayings in the SM. For example, James contains allusions to sayings found in Matthew 5 in James 1, 3, and 5; to sayings found in Matthew 6 in James 2, 4, and 5; and to sayings found in Matthew 7 in James 1 and 3. Thus one cannot infer from the epistle of James that its author was familiar with the SM in its present form, even if as seems likely he was familiar with at least many of its sayings.

3. Although James's epistle contains many, often striking, allusions to sayings found in the SM, it contains no direct quotations of those sayings in form close to what appears in Matthew. In fact, generally speaking the allusions are more conceptual than verbal. For example, although James 3:17-18 appears rather clearly to allude to five Beatitudes, in Greek it has only one significant word in common with Matthew 5:3-9 (*dikaiosunē,* "righteousness"). James has *agnē* where Matthew has *katharoi* (Matt. 5:8), *eirēnikē* and *poiousin eirēnēn* instead of *eirēnopoioi* (Matt. 5:9); *epieikēs* instead of *praeis*

(Matt. 5:5); and *mestē eleous* instead of *eleēmones* (Matt. 5:7). The verbally strongest allusion is in James 5:12, but even here the allusion does not rise to the level of a direct quotation (see Table 31, where the underlined English words represent verbal parallels in Greek). Of the 32 words in the Greek text of James 5:12, seventeen (17) are found in Matthew 5:34-37, never with more than three words in a row being the same in both texts (and this even includes words appearing in different grammatical forms). The fluidity of James's allusions to the sayings in the SM with respect to both order and wording count against Welch's theory that the SM had achieved essentially fixed form prior to the composition of the epistle of James.

Table 31. James 5:12 as an Allusion to Matthew 5:34-37	
Matthew 5:34-37 NKJV	**James 5:12 NKJV**
"<u>But</u> I say to you, <u>do not swear</u> at all: <u>neither by heaven</u>, for it is God's throne; <u>nor by the earth</u>, for it is His footstool; <u>nor</u> by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. <u>But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,'</u> and your <u>'No,' 'No.'</u> For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."	"<u>But</u> above all, my brethren, <u>do not swear,</u> <u>either by heaven</u> <u>or by earth or</u> with any other oath. But let your 'Yes,' be 'Yes,' and *your* 'No,' 'No,' lest you fall into judgment."

Although no direct relationship between James and the SM (or even something close to the SM) is likely, the many thematic connections suggest that the two works were related in their origins. Ben Witherington suggested that "both the author of James and the First Evangelist knew the same version of these sayings of Jesus, which is to say they knew the same version of Q, the Aramaic one" (Witherington 2006, 31). Since no hard date can be assigned to either work, the relationship is at best one of several factors to consider in estimating the most likely period of their composition. Assuming that James the Lord's brother was the author (likely through an amanuensis or secretary) of the epistle—an assumption against which there are no compelling arguments—it must be dated before James's death in AD 62, perhaps as early as the 40s (Penner 1996, 35-103; Bauckham 1999, 11-25; Köstenberger, Kellum, and Quarles 2009, 703-711). As was discussed in the previous chapter, Matthew was likely written in the 60s or 70s (§4.10). These likely

ranges of dates for the two books are consistent with the view that James was written before the sayings of the SM had attained well-defined form in Greek. In any case, no argument from James can be made against the conclusion that the SM was composed by Matthew based on Jesus' Galilean sermon augmented with other sayings and discourse units from Jesus' itinerant teaching.

5.5.4 Paul and the Sermon on the Mount

Even more important than the relationship of the SM and James for the purposes of this study is the question of the relationship between the SM and the writings of the apostle Paul. In his study of the ST, John Welch cautiously accepted Hans Dieter Betz's suggestion that the reference to being "least in the kingdom of heaven" in Matthew 5:19 may reflect an "anti-Pauline" polemic that was insinuated into the SM sometime after Paul (in 1 Cor. 15:9) had referred to himself as "the least of the apostles" (Welch 1999, 141-42; see Betz 1985, 20-21). He regarded other alleged anti-Pauline elements in the SM as less plausible (Welch 1999, 142-43). The implication is that if Matthew 5:19 originated from a polemic against Paul and is not an authentic saying of Jesus, its omission in the ST (cf. 3 Ne. 12:19-20) is evidence for that sermon's authenticity in its Book of Mormon setting.

The argument for anti-Paulinism in Matthew 5:19 turns on what is more likely an accidental coincidence in wording with 1 Corinthians 15:9. Contextually, the two statements really have nothing to do with one another. Paul in self-deprecating humility refers to himself as "the least [*elachistos*] of the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:9) because he had been a persecutor of the church prior to Christ's appearance to him. Matthew 5:19 reports Jesus saying that whoever relaxes one of the "least [*elachistōn*] of the commandments" will be "called least [*elachistos*] in the kingdom of heaven." The wording of Jesus' statement here reflects Jewish legal distinctions between the greatest and least requirements of the Torah (Keener 2009a, 178-79), a meaning unrelated to Paul's usage in 1 Corinthians 15:9. Moreover, Matthew 5:19 would seem to be a rather mild judgment if the text was meant as a polemical rebuke to Paulinists. Matthew uses the Greek word *elachistos* in other contexts where it clearly cannot be taken as a covert critical reference to Paul (Matt. 2:6; 25:40, 45). The verbal coincidence is therefore simply too slender a basis for interpreting Matthew 5:19 as anti-Pauline.

The main scholar, other than Betz, arguing for an anti-Pauline interpretation of Matthew (not just the SM) is David C. Sim, who has devoted part of a book and several periodical articles to making a case for this reading of Matthew (Sim 1998, 188-212, and Sim 2002, 2007, 2008, 2009). Sim's case depends on a number of questionable moves and overly subtle connections similar to the one concerning Matthew 5:19. He assumed that Matthew was written in the 80s or 90s (Sim 2009, 405), which while possible is far from assured. He also assumed not only that Paul's epistles were widely available by the 80s, reasonable in itself up to a point (ibid., 405-408), but that Paul and his theology would have been so well known to Christians outside his sphere of influence that they would have picked up on all sorts of subtle allusions in Matthew to Paul and Paulinism.

An example of this unrealistic expectation comes in what Sim claimed is a particularly clear intertextual allusion to Paul in Matthew. The Gospel quotes Jesus saying to Peter after his confession of Jesus as the Son of God, "For flesh and blood [*sarx kai haima*] has not revealed [*apekalupsen*] this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). Sim noted the verbal similarities between this saying and Paul's statement that when God was pleased "to reveal [*apokalupsai*] His Son in me…I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood [*sarki kai haimati*]" (Gal. 1:16-17). Observing that no other NT text conjoins the expression "flesh and blood" with the language of revelation (which he claimed cannot be coincidental), and arguing that Jesus' words to Peter are a Matthean addition, Sim concluded that "we must assume that the chronologically later Matthean text is based to some extent on the earlier Pauline material" (Sim 2009, 413). However, the expression "flesh and blood" occurs in only three other places in the NT (1 Cor. 15:50; Eph. 6:12; Heb. 2:14); the fact that revelation is not mentioned in those three texts is hardly significant. To construe the Matthean saying of Jesus as an anti-Pauline polemical element, Sim speculated that some Paulinists in Matthew's day may have been using Paul's statement in Galatians 1:16-17 to undermine Peter's authority (415). Not only is there no evidence to support this speculation, the whole argument requires that Matthew's readers would have picked up on the allusion (basically from three words) and somehow understood it as a response to anti-Petrine Paulinists.

Such is the weakness of the case for anti-Paulinism in Matthew (for further critiques, see Davies 1963, 316-66; Foster 2011; Willitts 2009, 2011; Iverson 2012).

It implies that the Gospel author or his source felt free to invent sayings of Jesus to counter Paulinism but only with such overly subtle hints. This way of reading Matthew fails to account for the fact that the Gospel says not a single word about circumcision, the paramount issue among Paul's known Jewish-Christian opponents in the first century (as Galatians especially attests). It is in fact possible to make a case that Matthew's theology was far closer to that of Paul (in addition to the essays by Willitts, see Goulder 1974, 153-70, who actually argues that Matthew was dependent on Paul; for an evangelical view, see Wenham 2008, 197-206). Like James, Paul shows significant awareness of the same ethical teachings of Jesus incorporated in the SM and the SP (see especially Rom. 12:12, 14, 18, 20-21; 13:8-10; cf. Matt. 5:9, 12, 17, 38-39, 43-44; 7:12; Luke 6:23, 27-28, 31-32, 35).

5.5.5   Welch on the Non-Matthean Vocabulary of the Sermon

In addition to his appeal to Betz's theory of a pre-Matthean SM and his argument from allusions to the SM in James, Welch offered one other argument for viewing the SM as a pre-Matthean text: its supposedly un-Matthean vocabulary. He explained: "Of the 383 basic vocabulary words in the Sermon on the Mount, I count 73 (or 19% of the total) that appear *only* in the Sermon (sometimes more than once) and *never* elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew; in fact, they often are *never* used again in the entire New Testament…. Thus on the level of mere vocabulary, the Sermon on the Mount appears to be unlike Matthew's writings" (Welch 1999, 215, 216).

Welch's statistical argument might have some merit if it would be unusual for one-fifth of the vocabulary in a substantial passage in an author's book to occur only in that passage. In theory, markedly different vocabulary might function as part of a larger case for the view that the text was adopted whole from a pre-Matthean source (cf. Stanton 1987, 184, who did not think such a case can be made for the SM). The premise obviously may be tested by examining passages in other books to see what percentage of the vocabulary in that passage is not found elsewhere in the book. In order to test Welch's argument as fairly as possible, one should first review the statistics concerning the vocabulary of the SM. There are 1,938 total words in Matthew 5:3-7:27 (counting *pseudomai* in 5:11, but not counting the doxology in 6:13). Rather than counting only "basic" vocabulary words (the definition of "basic"

being debatable; Welch actually gave no definition), every word will be counted here. This approach yields a pool of 423 different words in Matthew 5:3-7:27, counting the article, *kai*, and other such words. (Varied grammatical forms of a particular word are all counted as the same word.) This approach is not only objectively defensible but is likely to yield the highest defensible percentage of words in the SM not found elsewhere in Matthew. This is in fact the case: using the parameters specified here, it turns out that there are 89 words in Matthew 5:3-7:27 that do not occur elsewhere in Matthew, or 21 per cent, a somewhat higher figure than Welch had given.

For the purpose of this study, six criteria guiding the choice of a test passage are stipulated that should work to the advantage of Welch's statistical argument concerning the vocabulary of the SM. (1) The book in which the passage appears should be written in Greek within the same general period of time or era as Matthew. (2) The passage should be one unlikely to have been taken from an earlier source. (3) The passage should make minimal use of direct quotations from the Old Testament or other texts. (4) The book in which the passage appears should be long enough to provide a sizable pool of vocabulary words. (5) The passage should be comparable to the SM in terms of the proportion of the passage to the whole book. (6) Very little of the passage should consists of proper names of people or places, since a large number of such names would likely result in a higher percentage of words not found elsewhere in the book.

Based on these criteria, and with no advance knowledge or prior estimate of what might be found, 1 Corinthians 3-4 was chosen as a test passage. (1) This passage was of course written in Greek around the same general period as Matthew (by any dating the two were written within thirty years of each other). (2) It may be regarded as certain that 1 Corinthians 3-4 is not drawn from any earlier source. (3) The passage has little in the way of direct quotations from the OT (limited to 3:19-20). Based on these second and third criteria, this passage ought to represent the author's own choice of words about as much as any passage in the NT might. (4) The epistle of 1 Corinthians is the second-longest of the epistles, thus providing about as large a pool of data as possible from any of the non-narrative books of the NT. (Romans, which is slightly longer, was not used in part because of its heavier use of OT quotations.) (5) The passage is comparable to the SM in terms of the proportion of the passage to the whole book. 1 Corinthians 3-4 has 44 verses, one-

tenth of the total in 1 Corinthians (437 verses). Likewise, Matthew 5:3-7:27 has one-tenth of the total verses in Matthew (107 out of 1069 verses). (6) 1 Corinthians 3-4 has only four proper names besides Jesus (Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Timothy). Apart from these considerations, the passage was chosen "blind," without any prior estimate as to what the study might find with regard to its vocabulary. It might also be worth noting that this was the first and only such comparison study done.

The results of this comparison study are as follows. 1 Corinthians 3-4 has a total word count of 728 words and a vocabulary of 229 different words. Of these 229 vocabulary words, 60 are not found elsewhere in 1 Corinthians (26%). This is a rather *higher* percentage than the 21% of the words in the SM not found elsewhere in Matthew. In fact, 22 of the vocabulary words in 1 Corinthians 3-4 (10%) are not found elsewhere *in any of the 13 Pauline writings* (Romans through Philemon). (Paul's epistles contain over 32,000 words, close to twice as many as the Gospel of Matthew which has over 18,000 words.) Ten of the words in the passage are found only once in the entire NT.

The findings concerning the vocabulary of the test passage in 1 Corinthians 3-4 show that the proportion of vocabulary in the SM not found elsewhere in Matthew is not especially high. As in any passage within a larger text, the SM has a certain proportion of vocabulary distinctive to that passage because it has its own distinctive themes, context, and genre, not because the whole passage was an autonomous text that the Evangelist inserted into the Gospel. Thus, 27 of the 89 words in the SM that do not appear elsewhere in Matthew appear in Mark or Luke only in parallel sayings, that is, sayings parallel to those in which the word is used in the SM. Another 14 of those 89 words also do not appear *anywhere* in Mark or Luke; 13 of those 28 words do not appear anywhere else in the NT. Welch noted that some of the words in the SM "are *never* again used in the entire New Testament" (Welch 1999, 215), not recognizing that this fact works against his argument that these words are un-Matthean. To state the matter another way, out of the 423 vocabulary words of the SM, there are only 48 words (about 11%) that do not appear elsewhere in Matthew but that are used in Mark or Luke in verses other than parallel sayings. Welch's argument that the number of such words in the SM is suggestive of the non-Matthean origin of the SM is clearly groundless.

Welch gave only one example of a specific word in the SM that he thought might be deemed un-Matthean. He observed that the SM uses the word *doma* for "gift" in Matthew 7:11 even though outside the SM Matthew uses the synonym *dōron* nine times (Welch 1999, 216). This fact appears less significant when more information is gathered. Two key points may be mentioned.

1. The word *doma* appears only once in the other Gospels, in Luke's parallel saying in Luke 11:13. What makes this information telling is that Luke places this parallel saying in a different context than Matthew—in a discourse later than the SP. Thus, even if the use of *doma* were suggestive of a pre-Matthean source, the parallel in Luke 11:13 would indicate that such a source was probably not a text comparable to Matthew's SM. The word also appears rarely in the NT outside the Gospels—only twice in Paul (Eph. 4:8; Phil. 4:17).

2. The words *doma* and *dōron*, though both can be translated "gift," are not interchangeable terms. The word *doma* is a more generic word that was used for any sort of gift from one person to another. On the other hand, *dōron* generally refers to a gift given in a sacral or religious context (Rev. 2:11 is a likely exception). The word appears with just this sense three times in the SM itself (Matt. 5:23, 24), and this is clearly its sense elsewhere in Matthew (8:4; 15:5; 23:18-19) and in the rest of the NT (quite clearly in Mark 7:11; Luke 21:1, 4; and six times in Hebrews). Even in Matthew 2:11 (cited by Welch), the "gifts" that the Magi give to the Christ child may be interpreted, in view of Matthew's consistent usage elsewhere, as religious offerings, though it might be another exception (as BDAG seems to treat it). In any case, the fact that both words appear in the SM—a salient fact Welch unfortunately did not address—completely negates the usage of *doma* as somehow un-Matthean.

According to Welch, the non-Matthean nature of the vocabulary of the SM is also shown by the fact that few of its words can be regarded as distinctively Matthean. Specifically, Welch stated that only two words in the SM, "hell" (*geenna*) and "scribe" (*grammateus*), "are used by Matthew in greater preponderance than other NT writers," and that "slap" (*rhapizei*) is the only word used by Matthew both in and outside the SM that is not found in any other NT writing (Welch 1999, 216). Welch is correct about *rhapizei*, but the rest of his statements are factually incorrect and his argument is entirely misleading.

First of all, obviously the 13 words in the SM that occur nowhere else in the NT "are used by Matthew in greater preponderance than other NT writers." Judging from the context of Welch's remark, however, he probably meant to refer to words that are used by Matthew both in the SM and elsewhere in his Gospel. Even with this qualification, Welch's statement is demonstrably incorrect. There are at least 35 additional such words that by any measure "are used by Matthew in greater preponderance than other NT writers." These 35 Greek words fit the following criteria:

1. They appear both in the SM and elsewhere in Matthew.
2. There are more instances of each word in Matthew than in any other NT book.
3. There are more instances of each word in Matthew than in any other NT author's group of writings (e.g., Luke and Acts combined, or Paul's thirteen epistles combined). For the purpose of this study, the Pastoral Epistles are counted as Pauline but Hebrews is not (a consideration which would make little difference in the result given here). Note that Luke and Acts are both slightly longer than Matthew (so that together they are more than twice its length) and that Paul's thirteen epistles are nearly twice as long combined as Matthew.
4. The number of occurrences of the word in Matthew is proportionately greater than in any other NT writer. For example, if a word occurs 10 times in Matthew and 5 times in James, the word is not counted.
5. At least 25% of all NT occurrences of the word appear in Matthew (even though Matthew accounts for only about 13% of the words in the Greek NT).

These are the 35 words that fit all five of the above criteria: *aggareuō, amphiennumi, apodidomi, apostasion, argos, arketos, basileia, dendron, diorussō, ekballō, ekeithen, emprosthen, enduma, enochos, epanō, ethnikos, homoioō, horkos, hupokritēs, karpos, kruptō, odous, oligopistos, paradidomi, peinaō, petra, phainō, phronimos, praüs, sarpos, skandalizō, sullegō, sunagō, thesauros, tote.* The two words mentioned by Welch, *geena* and *grammateus*, were not included because they did not meet the fourth criterion of greater proportionate representation.

An additional 12 Greek words fit all of the above criteria except the third, typically because Luke-Acts is more than twice the length of Matthew: *an*, *apagō*, *apechō*, *duo*, *heōs*, *hopōs*, *idou*, *kruptos*, *oikia*, *pharisaios*, *prophētēs*, *Solomōn*.

Second, Welch's argument misses the bigger picture of how Matthew's vocabulary compares to that of the NT as a whole. Again, the Gospel of Matthew accounts for about 13% of the total words in the Greek NT. This may be taken as implying that even if the entire NT had one author and if subject matter did not affect distribution of vocabulary, for the average Greek word about 13% of its NT occurrences would fall in Matthew. Of course this is not how things actually work out: Matthew is one of at least eight authors in the NT (perhaps more), the subject matters of the books differ due to their genres and immediate purposes, and some words simply tend to be used more than others. The actual distribution of vocabulary words may therefore be expected to look more like a bell curve shifted toward one side to reflect the author's distinctive vocabulary. This is in fact what one finds when the entire vocabulary of the SM is examined. Of the 423 vocabulary words in the SM, 58 of them are used by Matthew less than 10 per cent of the total usage in the NT, while 204 of them are used by Matthew more than 20 per cent of the total NT usage. (If the SM were markedly un-Matthean in its vocabulary, one would expect these two statistics to be reversed.) The remaining 161 words fall into the middle range of 10 to 20 per cent, clustering roughly around the 13 per cent mark consistent with the proportion of words in Matthew relative to the entire NT. There are actually 56 words in the SM for which Matthew has half or more of all NT occurrences. Viewed in this way, the vocabulary of the SM appears very much to be Matthean.

Finally, Welch's argument considers only words as individual units and not how Matthew combines words in phrases. For example, Matthew is the only NT author to use the expression "kingdom of heaven"—and he uses it in both the SM and in other places in his Gospel. Thus, Matthew not only uses *basileia* ("kingdom") more often than the other NT authors, he uses it in a unique way. Additional examples of such distinctive usage will be given in the following section.

Nothing that has been said here should be misunderstood as denying that pre-Matthean *source material* stands behind the SM. Ultimately Jesus' sayings are the source of the material in the SM, and Jesus' historical sermon in Galilee

provided a basic framework and connected discourse units reflected in both the SM and the SP. Nevertheless, Welch's arguments for denying Matthew any significant role in the shaping, arranging, or wording of the material in the SM fail. That substantial development took place from Jesus' Galilean sermon to Matthew's presentation of that sermon in the SM is practically certain.

5.5.6   Evidence of Matthean Redaction of Jesus' Sayings

Commentators on the SM all too often fail to read the SM in the context of the rest of the Gospel of Matthew. Wayne Baxter has pointed out many "thematic and linguistic connections between the Sermon on the Mount and the rest of the narrative, which are accentuated when compared to Luke's presentation of the Sermon material" (Baxter 2004, 30). The cumulative force of this evidence strongly points to the conclusion that Matthew has emphasized specific themes or motifs in the SM and that he has used his own distinctive vocabulary in reporting the sayings of Jesus in the SM. That Matthew has handled Jesus' sayings in such ways is what biblical scholars mean when they refer to Matthew's *redaction* of Jesus' sayings. Redaction criticism does not necessitate or assume that the Evangelist is creating sayings of Jesus and does not compromise the truth of the Gospels (contra Thomas and Farnell 1998; R. Thomas 2000); rather, it seeks to elucidate the ways in which the Evangelist has influenced the presentation of Jesus' sayings by his editorial and stylistic choices (e.g., Osborne 1999, 2000). Numerous studies have demonstrated the truth of this conclusion (e.g., Olsthoorn 1975, 8-17; Piper 1979, 56-65; Stanton 1987, 185; Evans 2004). Table 32 presents some of the more compelling examples of this phenomenon in the SM. Many but not all of the examples given here are mentioned in some of the studies cited in this paragraph, especially those by Baxter, Olsthoorn, and Piper.

Far from the SM being un-Matthean in its vocabulary, the evidence surveyed in Table 32 shows that the SM reflects distinctively Matthean language and motifs. Especially clear examples are the use of the expression "the kingdom of heaven," the adjectives *praüs* ("meek") and "fool" (*mōros*), the verb "slap" (*rhapizein*), the term *ethnikoi* ("Gentiles"), and the title "the evil one" for the devil, all of which are found in Matthew both in the SM and elsewhere but not in Mark or Luke at all.

Table 32. Matthean Verbal and Thematic Elements in the Sermon on the Mount		
Sermon on the Mount	**Elsewhere in Matthew**	**Synoptic Comparisons**
Seven references to the "kingdom" (*basileia*) in the SM (5:3, 10, 19, 20; 6:10, 33; 7:21), including five occurrences of the expression "the **kingdom of heaven**" (*basileia tōn ouranōn*).	Jesus proclaimed "the gospel of the kingdom" (4:23; 9:35; cf. 4:17; also 3:2; 10:7). Matthew has the expression "the **kingdom of heaven**" 32 times, mostly in statements by Jesus, but also in statements by John the Baptist (3:2) and the disciples (18:1; cf. 10:7).	There is only one reference to the "kingdom" (*basileia*) in the SP (Luke 6:20; cf. 12:31-32). That Jesus proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God is stated only once, sometime after the SP (Luke 8:1). Matthew is the only biblical author to use the expression "the kingdom of heaven" (*basileia tōn ouranōn*).
"Blessed are the **meek** [*praüs*]" (5:5).	Jesus describes himself as "**meek**" (11:29) and enters Jerusalem as the "**meek**" king on a donkey (21:5).	Matthew is the only Synoptic author to use the term *praüs*.
"Blessed are those who hunger and **thirst** for **righteousness**…. Blessed are those who are persecuted for **righteousness'** sake…. I have not come to abolish but to **fulfill** [*plērōsai*]…. For I tell you, unless your **righteousness** [*dikaiosunē*] exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (5:6, 10, 17, 20); also 6:1, 33 ("Seek first his kingdom and **righteousness**").	"Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to **fulfill** [*plērōsai*] all **righteousness** [*dikaiosunē*]" (3:15, spoken to John; see also 21:32, spoken in reference to John).	The word "thirst" (*dipsaō*) appears elsewhere in Matthew (25:35, 37, 42, 44) but not in Mark or Luke. Luke does not use the word *dikaiosunē* in the SP (he uses it only in 1:75) and has no sayings parallel to Matt. 5:17, 20. Mark does not use the word at all. Luke has no saying parallel to Matt. 3:15. Luke 6:21a, parallel to Matt. 5:6, lacks the term "righteousness." Luke 12:31, parallel to Matt. 6:33, lacks "and his righteousness." "Fulfill" (*plērōsai*) is a notable word in Matthew (16 times; cf. 2 times in Mark, 9 times in Luke).
"Blessed are the **merciful**" (5:7).	Only Matthew quotes Jesus quoting Hosea 6:6, "I require **mercy**, not sacrifice" (Matt. 9:13; 12:7). Only Matthew has Jesus' parable of the servant who did not show mercy (18:33); he alone quotes Jesus condemning the Pharisees for failing to show mercy (23:23).	None of the sayings cited here in Matthew appears in Mark or Luke. Luke 10:37 is the only text in Mark or Luke referring to mercy as an attribute expected of human beings.

God is "your/my/our **Father who is in heaven**" (5:16; 6:1, 9; 7:11, 21), "your **heavenly Father**" (5:48; 6:14, 26, 32).	God is "my **Father who is in heaven**" (10:32, 33; 12:50; 16:17; 18:10), "your **Father in heaven**" (18:14), "my **heavenly Father**" (15:13; 18:35; cf. 23:9).	Jesus calls God "your Father who is in heaven" only in Mark 11:25. Matthew is the only NT writer to use the term "heavenly" (*ouranios*).
Whoever says, "**Fool**" (*mōros*), will be liable to Gehenna (5:22); the one who hears Jesus' words and does not do them is like a fool (*mōros*) (7:26).	Jesus calls the Pharisees "**fools**" (*mōroi*) (23:17) and tells a parable about five virgins who were "fools" (25:2, 3, 8).	The word *mōros* appears nowhere in any of the other Gospels, including in Luke's saying parallel to Matthew 7:26 (Luke 6:49).
Divorcing (*apolusai*) one's wife permissible only in cases of sexual immorality (*porneias*, 5:31-32).	Joseph, a "righteous" man, considered divorcing (*apolusai*) Mary privately (1:19), because her pregnancy implied sexual immorality. Jesus also said later that divorcing one's wife except for *porneia* is wrong (19:9); see 15:19.	No mention of Joseph's thought to divorce Mary. Divorce not mentioned in the SP. No exception clause for sexual immorality in divorce (Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). Luke never uses the term *porneia*; Mark has it only in Mark 7:21 (par. Matt. 15:19).
Not only should one avoid swearing falsely and fulfill one's **oaths** (*orkous*), but one should not **swear an oath** (*omosai*) at all by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or one's head, but let your yes be yes and your no be no (5:33-37).	In his woes on the Pharisees, Jesus condemns them for their views on **swearing oaths** (*omosai*) by the gold of the temple, by the altar or the offering, and by heaven (23:16-22). Peter denied knowing Jesus with an "**oath**" (*orkou*).	Luke's only reference to oaths or swearing of oaths is in Zechariah's speech (Luke 1:73). Luke has a passage similar to Matt. 23 but with no references to oaths (Luke 11:39-52). Mark mentions that Peter swore an oath (*omnunai*) when denying knowing Jesus (14:71). Luke does not include this detail.
If someone **slaps** (*rhapizei*) you on the cheek you should offer him the other one (5:39).	Some of the soldiers **slapped** (*erapisan*) Jesus (26:67).	No other NT author uses *rhapizein*. The parallel verse in the SP uses *tuptoni* ("strikes," Luke 6:29).
If you are **pressed into service** (*aggareuō*) for one mile, go two (5:41).	Simon of Cyrene was **pressed into service** (*aggareuō*) to carry Jesus' cross (27:32).	Mark 15:21 is parallel to Matt. 27:32 and is the only other NT occurrence of the verb (cf. Luke 23:26).
Even tax-collectors (*telōnai*) love those who love them, and even the Gentiles (*ethnikoi*) greet their brethren (5:46-47). Don't be like the Gentiles (*ethnikoi*) who babble in prayer (6:7).	The unrepentant church member is to be treated like the Gentile (*ethnikos*) and the tax-collector (*telōnēs*) (18:17).	The word *ethnikoi* is found in the NT only in Matt. 5:47 and 18:17 and in 3 John 7 (the usual word translated "Gentiles" is *ethnoi*). The SP has sayings similar to but not the same as Matthew 5:47 (Luke 6:32-34). (The KJV has "publicans," following a variant reading.)
Disciples are to be "**perfect**" (*teleioi*) as their Father in	Jesus told the rich young man that he should sell his	Neither Mark nor Luke uses *teleios*. Luke has a saying in

heaven is perfect (5:48).	possessions and follow Jesus if he wished to be "**perfect**" (*teleios*, Matt. 19:21).	the SP parallel to Matthew 5:48 but using the term "merciful" instead. By using "perfect" Matt. 5:48 becomes a fitting summary of 5:21-48. Both Mark (10:21) and Luke (18:22) have a saying parallel to Matt. 19:21 but without *teleios*.
The Lord's Prayer ends, "and deliver us from **the evil one**" (*apo tou ponērou*, 6:13a).	Only Matthew refers to the devil as "**the evil one**" (Matt. 5:37; 13:19, 38).	Luke lacks that final line in his version of the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:4). Where Matthew refers to "the evil one" in the parable of the sower, Mark calls him "Satan" (4:15) and Luke calls him "the devil" (8:12).
"When you **fast** [*nēsteuēte*]," do it so as not to be noticed by other people (6:16-18).	Jesus "**fasted**" (*nēsteusas*) in the wilderness (4:2). He was asked why his disciples did not fast (9:14-15).	Sayings about fasting do not appear in Luke's SP. Luke says Jesus "ate nothing" in the wilderness (Luke 4:2). Both Mark and Luke include the account of Jesus being asked why his disciples did not fast (Mark 2:18-20; Luke 5:33-35). Luke recounts the parable of the Pharisee bragging in prayer about his fasting (Luke 18:12).
"**Therefore** [*oun*] do not **be anxious** [*merimnēsēte*], saying…" (6:31). Matthew's wording makes a smoother transition here than in the parallel in Luke and clarifies that it is only *anxious* seeking for material needs that is wrong.	Matthew uses "**therefore**" (*oun*) 56 times, as compared to no more than 5 times in Mark and 32 or 33 times in Luke. He also uses "**be anxious**" 6 times in this passage (6:25-34).	"And you, do not seek…" (Luke 12:29). Luke uses "seek" much more often (25 times) than does Matthew (14 times) and uses "be anxious" only 3 times in this passage (12:22-26).
"Do not throw your **pearls** before swine" (7:6).	The kingdom of heaven is like a man who finds a **pearl** of great value (13:45-46).	Only Matthew has the sayings in 7:6 and 13:45-46. The other Gospels make no mention of pearls.
"You will know them by their fruits…. So every good tree **bears** [*poiei*] **good fruit** [*karpous*], but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit" (7:16-18 NASB). "Thus you will know them by their fruits" (7:20).	"Bear fruit" (*poiēsate karpon*) worthy of repentance (3:8). "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit" (12:33).	"Bear fruit" (*poiēsate karpous*) worthy of repentance (Luke 3:8). "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit" (Luke 6:43-44).

"**Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire**" (*pan dendron mē poioun karpon kalon ekkoptetai kai eis pur balletai*, 7:19).	"Therefore **every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire**" (*pan oun dendron mē poioun karpon kalon ekkoptetai kai eis pur balletai*, 3:10). "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing [*poiounti*] its fruits [*karpous*]" (21:43, cf. vv. 34, 41).	"Therefore **every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire**" (*pan oun dendron mē poioun karpon kalon ekkoptetai kai eis pur balletai*, Luke 3:9). Luke does not have this statement in the SP. The saying about the kingdom of God being taken away is not found in Mark or Luke.
"Not everyone who says to me, '**Lord, Lord**,' [*kurie kurie*] will enter…. many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord [*kurie kurie*]…' And then I will declare to them, '**I never knew you**…'" (7:21-22).	"Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, '**Lord, lord** [*kurie kurie*], open to us.' But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, **I do not know you**'" (25:11-12).	"Why do you call me '**Lord, Lord**,' [*kurie kurie*] and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46). Luke does not have the saying "I never knew you" or the parable of the ten virgins.
False disciples are called "you workers of **lawlessness** [*anomian*]" (7:23).	The angels will remove those who do **lawlessness** (*anomian*, 13:41). The scribes and Pharisees are full within of lawlessness (23:28). Lawlessness will increase (24:12).	Mark and Luke never use the word *anomia*. Luke 13:27, which is roughly parallel to Matthew 7:23, uses *adikia* instead.

The finding of Matthean vocabulary and expressions in the SM refutes Don Sorenson's view that the SM originated through a "controlled-tradition" process in which Jesus' sayings were transmitted "in word-perfect form" (D. Sorenson 2004, 124). Other elements of the SM reflect Matthean emphases or themes in ways that go beyond vocabulary, as in the exception to the no-divorce standard of sexual immorality, found in Matthew's reporting of Jesus' sayings and also in his report of Joseph's initial plan to divorce Mary quietly. The cumulative weight of this evidence strongly supports the conclusion that Matthew's literary activity played a significant role in the wording as well as the selection of material in the SM.

5.5.7   The Sermon as an Integral Part of the Gospel of Matthew

Several lines of evidence have been presented in this section and the one preceding that show that the SM is "an integral part of Matthew's Gospel" (Stanton 1987, 187). The SM is one of five large blocks of teaching material alternating with blocks of mostly narrative material; a close comparison of Matthew 5-7 with Matthew 8-9 supports this common view of the Gospel's structure (§5.4.1). The SM exhibits a

far more complex, literary structure than the SP (§5.4.2), with literary patterns (especially involving triads) in common with the other Matthean discourses (§5.4.3). Close examination of the form, structure, and arrangement of material in specific discourse units within the SM, such as the Beatitudes, the Antitheses, and the Two Ways, further demonstrate Matthean literary activity (§5.4.4). The triadic structural patterns in the SM often are not evident in the parallel passages in the SP or other discourses in Luke (§5.4.5), making it clear that they are the result of Matthean artistry. These findings are consistent with the dominant view in Gospel scholarship that the SM and the SP both stem from an earlier non-extant source commonly dubbed Q, in which the material was typically closer in form and arrangement to what is found in Luke than in Matthew (§5.5.1).

Several arguments mounted by LDS scholar John Welch against the view that the SM is an integral part of Matthew's Gospel were critiqued. Hans Dieter Betz's view of the SM as a pre-Matthean text agrees with the conventional view of a Q source mediating between Jesus' teachings and the SM, and so provides no support for John Welch's view that the SM closely corresponds in form and content to Jesus' historical Galilean sermon (§5.5.2). Welch rightly noted that James alludes to many of the sayings in the SM, but the evidence shows that James was not drawing from a text of the SM or something like it (§5.5.3). Welch's claim that the vocabulary of the SM is so non-Matthean that it must have been composed more or less in its present form earlier than Matthew is based on flawed assumptions about vocabulary usage (§5.5.5). To the contrary, there is good evidence that Matthew exerted considerable influence on the word choices as well as emphases and themes of the SM (§5.5.6).

From these findings, in conjunction with the earlier finding that the SM and the SP are two versions of the same historical sermon (§5.3), some important conclusions may be drawn of direct and important relevance to the question of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon's ST, which so closely parallels the SM. One may accept all of the sayings in the SM as authentic sayings of Jesus (the perspective taken in this study) while still recognizing that the SM is not a verbatim transcript of the historical sermon delivered by Jesus in Galilee. First of all, the SM written in Greek while Jesus' sermon was almost certainly spoken in Aramaic, so that in any case what one is reading is not a verbatim transcript. Furthermore, the

sayings in the SM have been selected, arranged, structured, and edited in keeping with Matthew's larger didactic purposes and literary preferences. The ideas are primarily those of Jesus but also secondarily those of the Evangelist, as is the wording (even after the fact of translation is taken into account). The arrangement began with a comparatively brief and simple message closer in scope and content to the SP in Luke, and from there Matthew expanded the sermon using other sayings and discourse units of Jesus delivered on other occasions during his itinerant ministry, so that the arrangement, structure, and literary features of the SM are primarily Matthew's. Ronald Huggins was correct in concluding that in the case of the SM "it is clear that it was Matthew who aggressively restructured and expanded the traditional material that came into his hands in the interest of the design and message of his gospel" (Huggins 1997, 143). This fact remains a serious objection to the historical authenticity of the ST as a sermon preached by Jesus to the Nephites.

5.6 The Sermon on the Mount and the Temple

The historical, literary analysis of the origins of the SM presented in the preceding sections of this chapter (§5.2-§5.5) establishes a foundational understanding of the SM from which the historical authenticity of the ST is naturally called into question. However, believing, conservative Mormons may turn the argument around: for them the ST, which they accept as historically authentic, calls into question the methods and conclusions of Synoptic Gospel scholarship especially with regards to the origins of the SM. Thus John Welch argued that historians quite properly revise their interpretations of the past in the light of new documentary evidence, and it is his "personal verdict…that the Sermon at the Temple constitutes such evidence" (Welch 1999, 218).

One way that Welch has sought to turn the historical argument on its head is by his thesis that the ST provides a kind of hermeneutical key to the proper understanding of the SM. It does so "primarily by disclosing the *context* in which Jesus spoke these words" (Welch 1999, 15), specifically, a ritual context associated with the temple. Because of the lack of this contextual perspective, the SM "has remained a sealed text" (23). Welch viewed his discovery in 1988 of "the temple pattern in the overall structure of the Sermon at the Temple" as a challenge to the

perspective of "biblical critics" that the presence of the SM in 3 Nephi is the Achilles' heel of the Book of Mormon (Welch 2010, 53). For one thing, if the ST shows that the SM was a temple or ritual text used by the earliest Christians, this finding would contradict the conventional academic view that Matthew shaped the structure and contents of the sermon as part of his Gospel. "Seeing its temple character also reinforces the view that the Sermon on the Mount should be thought of as a pre-Matthean source" (Welch 2009, 211). For another thing, if the ST provides a revolutionary and compelling insight into the coherence and meaning of the SM, this would be difficult to explain as the work of the young, uneducated Joseph Smith. "Instead of being a liability or an embarrassment to the historicity of the Book of Mormon, the text and context of the Sermon on the Mount in the Book of Mormon turn out, in my view, to be among its greatest strengths" (Welch 1999, 126).

Welch's argument might have some merit if the ST provided the long-lost hermeneutical key to the SM that he claims. The only way to test a key is to try it to see if it will fit into the lock and successfully turn the lock and open the door. To test Welch's key, in this section Welch's arguments for viewing the SM as a "temple text" will be examined. His treatment of the narrative context of the ST in the Book of Mormon as also supporting a temple-centred interpretation of the sermon will be considered later in this study (§7.3).

5.6.1   Welch's Temple Description of the Sermon on the Mount

John Welch has explained his view of the SM as "a temple text" (Welch 1999, 4, 23) in several ways or from several angles. One can see something of the complexity of his theory in his statement, "Reading the Sermon on the Mount as a text that was integrally linked to temple vocabulary, temple authority, temple ritual, religious initiation and group identity formation explains many things about the unity, the meaning, the reception, and the durable memory of this seminal text" (Welch 2009, 209). This section reviews and analyses Welch's descriptions of the SM in order to characterize his theory as accurately as possible. His 2009 book *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* is the main basis for this review, though statements from other works by Welch on the SM or the ST are also cited as appropriate.

From one angle, Welch's thesis is a claim about **the dominant, unifying themes or motifs** of the SM. "This book sets out to show that the Sermon on the Mount is best understood in a matrix of temple themes. Temple vocabulary and allusions saturate every stage of this text." The SM has a "temple register" that must be heard if the coherence of the text is to be appreciated (Welch 2009, ix). Because of the failure to recognize its temple context, "all previous efforts to digest or explain the Sermon on the Mount completely and consistently have been unsatisfactory" (x). This context is signalled by the location of Jesus' discourse on a mountain, which recalls the mountain of God's revelation to Moses (15-39), and is expressed especially in the temple-related vocabulary of the SM, which Welch described as "coded" or "loaded" expressions, "buzz words" that would have been associated by first-century Jews with the temple (xi). Thus, "the Jewish audience hearing these words would have recognized temple-related language scattered throughout this text from beginning to end" (41). "These temple elements give the Sermon on the Mount its consistent voice" (183).

Second, Welch suggested that the temple provides the key to **a deeper, esoteric meaning** of the SM meant only for those who had been properly initiated. "By 'temple text' I mean one that contains allusions to the most sacred teachings and ordinances of the plan of salvation, things that are not to be shared indiscriminately" (Welch 1999, 23). "Jesus typically spoke in two registers: one at an obvious, ethical level, and the other at a more veiled level" (Welch 2010b, 44). Just as Jesus' parables "masked deeper and more esoteric messages from the gazing crowd," so also on one level the SM can be read "as ordinary moral statements" but on another level "enshrouded holier and more mystagogical instructions that were intended to be fully understood only by those insiders who had been given ears to hear and eyes to see" (Welch 2009, xi; similarly Welch 1999, 252). At the exoteric level the SM "can be read as an ordinary ethical discourse or simple summary of the main teachings of Jesus," but at the esoteric level it "can also be read as a symbolic, anagogical, or coded text" pertaining to ritualistic, initiatory, or covenantal meanings associated with the temple (Welch 2009, 42).

Third, according to Welch the SM **derives its authority from its temple context**. "By standing on the verbal and theological platform of the Temple, Jesus drew on the authority of the divine place" (Welch 2009, 190). The authority with

which Jesus spoke made sense in his culture's "conventional expectations" as the "voice of divine authority" that came "only because of temple access to the holy Presence" (191). The pervasive temple motifs of the SM "give it a permeating aura of authoritativeness" (192).

Fourth, Welch argued that the temple provides the key to understanding ***the structure or arrangement of material*** in the SM. Specifically, he argued that the SM "unfolds in a series of twenty-four [actually twenty-five] stages, all related to the Temple or temple themes" (Welch 2009, x). These stages constitute a "programmatic process" (67) through which the covenant community is guided into ever-higher transformative experiences. "Temple-related elements" are "found in each of its twenty-five stages" (188). These 25 stages form "a logical progression" (183) by which initiates are taken through three major levels or orders corresponding to the three parts of the Temple, with the third part of the Sermon corresponding to the Holy of Holies (157). "The Sermon on the Mount is systematically and effectively constructed in such a way that listeners are ritualistically guided, with confidence, stage by stage, from preliminary blessings and conditions, to higher cultic instructions and warnings, to eventually enable the hearers to withstand the forces of evil (as in Matthew 6:13; 7:20, 23, 25) and enter perfected into the presence of God (5:48; 7:21)" (192).

Fifth, Welch argues that the temple is the context in which ***the genre*** of the SM needs to be understood. It is by reading the SM in light of the temple that one can answer the question, "What kind of a text is this so-called 'sermon'?" (Welch 2009, 2). Welch's answer is that the SM functioned as a "temple text" in which "divine powers" were conveyed to the initiated "through symbolic or ceremonial means" and received along with divine commandments "by sacred oaths that allow the recipient to stand ritually in the presence of God" (Welch 1999, 23-24). He described the SM "as a script that lays out a course of transformational stages that are not just to be learned but also experienced by initiates converting to Christianity" (Welch 2009, 193). The earliest Christians may have used it as a catechetical text, perhaps "to instruct or remind initiates of church rules," perhaps "to instruct neophytes for baptism" (194; cf. Welch 1999, 242). He drew comparisons between the SM and a variety of ancient ritual texts concerned with initiating converts (Welch 2009, 194-97) and described ten characteristics of the SM that he argued are

"significant indicators that a ritual or ceremony in some way stands behind" it (Welch 2009, 199, see 199-202). Welch also suggested that the SM "was in fact used as an esoteric, sacred early Christian ritual" (Welch 2009, 219). Specifically, he described the SM as "an ascent text" or "ascension text" in which initiates are guided "step by step" from their lowly mundane condition to the apex of entering "the presence of God" (Welch 2009, 205; Welch 2010b, 45). "In the experience of this ascent, the fundamental unity of this text is found" (Welch 2009, 207). In Welch's view, "Jesus regularly used the Sermon on the Mount (or something like it) in instructing initiates and guiding them through the stages of induction into the full ranks of discipleship" (211-12).

In a later essay he commented, "I have advanced elsewhere the thesis that the sermon [the SM] should be understood as a unified text that was either used in early Christianity to prepare people to enter into a covenant to obey the commanded teachings of Jesus Christ or, perhaps, as a reflection of a very early Christian ritual ascent text through which people progress stage by stage until they can be admitted into the Lord's presence, as is seen especially in 3 Nephi 11-18" (Welch 2010a, 313). From this summary statement it appears that Welch distinguished the catechesis genre from the ritual ascent text genre as two similar yet distinct, possible views of the genre of the SM.

Finally, Welch contended that a proper interpretation of the SM reveals ***Jesus' temple-centred religious agenda***. "Jesus yearned for the restoration of an earlier, ideal temple-centric culture" (Welch 2009, ix). "The new Moses was not only a new lawgiver but also a new temple founder" (209). The SM was "written at an early time when Jesus and his followers were still hoping for a restoration, reform, and rejuvenation of the Temple, not its destruction or obsolescence" (211). Jesus had "desired to reconstitute the temple system in Jerusalem with a way of holiness he promised to raise up without mortal hands" (217). The SM in this context should be understood in terms of "the temple subtext for Jesus' program of temple renewal and restoration" (217-18). When it became clear that the Jerusalem temple would be destroyed, the early church understood Jesus to have established "a new temple system" for which "the old Temple" would one day be "rebuilt" as a "new temple" for "all people, whether Jewish or not" (217).

Welch's temple-centred model for interpreting the SM is assessed in the rest of this section by considering in turn each of the above six aspects of his position. In contrast to Welch's model, the position defended here is a *Messianic-kingdom model* for interpreting the SM. This model may be contrasted with Welch's model in terms of the six points discussed above as follows. (1) Although temple motifs do appear in the setting and sayings of the SM, the dominant theme of the SM is that of the Messianic kingdom. (2) Rather than contrasting exoteric and esoteric levels of meaning in the SM, one should contrast superficial moralistic interpretations with an interpretation of the SM as presenting the hope and values of the Messianic kingdom. (3) The SM derives its authority from Jesus himself as the Son of God in his Messianic, divine-royal status, not from a temple context. (4) Jewish didactic conventions, not a temple-oriented program or ritual purpose, are the basis for the structure or arrangement of Jesus' sayings in the SM. (5) The SM is a literary anthology of Jesus' proclamation and teaching concerning the values of the Messianic kingdom, composed around the core of a public didactic speech given by Jesus. Although elements of the SM were later put to use in catechetical and liturgical contexts, the SM was never itself a ritual or ceremonial text, nor was it an ascent text. (6) Jesus' "agenda" was the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom in which the man-made temple would be replaced by that which it at best typified, the unmediated presence of God among his people.

5.6.2   The Theme of the Sermon on the Mount

5.6.2.1 The Mountain Setting of the Sermon on the Mount

The location of Jesus' sermon on a "mountain" (Matt. 5:1) has long been regarded as suggesting a typological comparison of Jesus to Moses, who had received the Torah on Mount Sinai. As noted above, Welch argued at length that the mountain setting recalls primarily Moses on Sinai. "Most directly, the mountain setting of the Sermon on the Mount transports its participants to Mount Sinai" (Welch 2009, 17).

That Matthew viewed Jesus as in some sense a "new Moses" has been something of a commonplace in Christian thought (Allison 1993, 172-73). Matthew draws a number of *explicit* comparisons between Jesus and various earlier figures, including Jonah (12:38-41), Solomon (12:42), John the Baptist (11:16-19; 16:13-14),

Jeremiah (16:13-14), but above all David (1:1, 6, 17; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42-45). Yet although Moses is mentioned in the Gospel (17:3-4; 19:7-8; 22:24; 23:4), nowhere in Matthew is a comparison between Jesus and Moses made explicit, as Dale Allison, who defended a Moses Christology in Matthew, acknowledged (Allison 1993, 137-38).

In Matthew 5:1 Jesus "went up on the mountain" (ESV; *anebē eis to oros*), an expression found in the Torah often referring to Moses going up Mount Sinai (Exod. 3:1; 19:3, 12; 24:12, 15, 18; 34:1, 4; Deut. 5:5; 9:9; 10:1, 3; cf. Allison 1993, 174-75, some of whose citations are inapplicable). However, there are good reasons to question the inference that the point of the wording in Matthew 5:1 was to allude specifically to Moses. One such reason is that the same wording appears in the parallel passages in Mark 3:13 and Luke 6:12 (on these as parallels see above, §5.3.4), where scholars find little if any support for an allusion to Moses or Sinai. Another reason is that the same expression occurs in two other places in Matthew where no such allusion seems likely (in Galilee, Matt. 14:23; 15:29).

Moreover, in the most likely allusion in Matthew to Moses on Sinai, the wording of Matthew 5:1 is not used. Dan Lioy has noted that the Transfiguration, which took place on a high mountain, "seems to parallel the episode in which Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and 70 of Israel's elders accompanied Moses up Mount Sinai" (63, citing Exod. 24:1). Moses himself appeared, representing the Law, along with Elijah, representing the prophets, "a visual reminder that Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets" (Lioy 2010, 65, citing Matt. 5:17). But here Matthew writes that Jesus took his three disciples and "led them up a high mountain" (*anapherei autous eis oros hupsēlon*, Matt. 17:1; likewise Mark 9:2). Three verbal differences between this wording and that in Matthew 5:1 should be noted: (1) the use of a different verb, (2) the adjective "high" (*hupsēlon*), and (3) the fact that *oros* is anarthrous, lacking the article *to*. (As an interesting aside, Luke's parallel statement about the Transfiguration uses the same wording as in Matthew 5:1, *anebē eis to oros*.)

Yet another reason to question the proposed Sinai allusion in Matthew 5:1 is that the scene is dramatically different than those involving Moses on Sinai. In Exodus and Deuteronomy, Moses goes up the mountain to bring the Torah down to the people waiting fearfully below. In Matthew, Jesus goes "up the mountain" and sits down to address the people gathered before him in an open air meeting.

Probably the best understanding of Matthew 5:1 is that it refers, not to Jesus ascending a particular mountain, but rather going up "into the hill country" or "to the hills" above the Sea of Galilee not far from Capernaum (see §5.3.4 and the references given there). This is how modern English versions such as the NASB, NIV, NRSV, ESV, NLT, and NET (all of which in the OT are based on the Hebrew text) often read where the LXX happens to use the expression *eis to oros* (see Gen. 12:8; 19:17, 19; Num. 13:17; Deut. 1:24, 41, 43; Judg. 1:34; Neh. 8:15). These versions use "hill country" between 86 and 116 times in various constructions in the OT. If *to oros* means "the hill country" in Matthew 5:1, it would explain why the article is used even though no specific mountain or hill has been previously mentioned.

If some OT allusion is sought for the language of Matthew 5:1, there are other texts that may be more likely than the Sinai references. One such text is Psalm 23:3 LXX (24:3), "Who shall ascend onto the mountain of the Lord?" (*anabēsetai eis to oros*). (Quotations from the LXX are taken from the NETS unless indicated otherwise, cf. §1.8.) Several sayings of the SM also contain possible allusions or connection to the Psalm: Jesus' promise of God's act of mercy, his reference to the "pure in heart," and his warning about swearing (Matt. 5:7, 8, 33-37; cf. Ps. 23:3-5 LXX). There is also the prophecy found in both Micah and Isaiah that "many nations" will say "Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord" (*anabōmen eis to oros*), to the house of the God of Jacob, to be shown his ways (Isa. 2:3/Micah 4:2). Both of these texts do refer directly to the location of the temple on Mount Zion, so if one views Matthew 5:1 as alluding to either or both of these texts, the temple would be part of the allusion. However, the focus of the allusion would be Davidic, not Mosaic; Zionist, not Sinaitic. Moreover, the theme would be centred on the kingdom of God, not on temple ritual or ceremony (note Ps. 23:7-10 LXX; Micah 4:3/Isa. 2:4).

Other OT texts of significance to Matthew 5:1 and the rest of Matthew's narrative introduction to the SM come from the Book of Isaiah. Especially noteworthy is the following text: "…upon the mountains, like the feet of one bringing glad tidings [*euangelizomenou*] of a report of peace, like one bringing glad tidings [*euangelizomenos*] of good things, because I will make your salvation heard, saying to Sion, 'Your God shall reign [*basileusei*]'" (Isa. 52:7 LXX; cf. Rom. 10:15). Isaiah 52:7 is the only verse in the OT in which expressions of good news (gospel) and God's rule or kingdom occur together (Rowe 2002, 116; cf. Ps. 96:2, 10). In the

narrative introduction to the SM, Matthew reports that Jesus brought the good news of God's kingdom (Matt. 4:17) in the hills or mountains (Matt. 5:1). Arguably, then, the mountain or hill setting in Matthew 5:1 has more to do with Jesus fulfilling the vision of Isaiah 52:7 (see also Isa. 40:9) than it does with Jesus acting as a new Moses. Matthew's narrative also contains a clear allusion to Isaiah 61:1, where the speaker states that he is anointed "to bring good news" (*euangelisasthai*) and "to proclaim" (*kēruxai*) release to the captives. Matthew 4:23 states that Jesus was "proclaiming" (*kērussōn*) "the gospel" or good news (*to euangelion*) of the kingdom. Matthew himself quotes Isaiah 9:1-2 (8:23-9:1 LXX) and asserts its fulfilment in Jesus beginning his ministry in Capernaum near the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 4:13-16). His quotation from Isaiah 9 together with the allusions to later texts in Isaiah shows that Matthew presents the SM as Jesus' proclamation of the good news of the Messianic kingdom.

This line of interpretation finds support notably in a published dissertation by Terence Donaldson. While not entirely discounting Moses typology from the setting of the SM, Donaldson argued that "it is not the controlling factor and has been taken up into something else" (Donaldson 1985, 114), namely, the theme of Messianic "Zion eschatology" (116). Following Matthew's setting of the SM on a mountain (*oros*), the first reference to a mountain within the SM comes at 5:14 regarding the "city set upon a mountain" that "cannot be hidden." The eschatological Zion or New Jerusalem was to be the "the centre of the restored people of God" and "the source of light for the world" (117). In this context, the mountain of 5:1 is the gathering place of the first members of that restored people of God. "The mountain setting of the Sermon is presented by the evangelist against the background of Zion eschatology—though a Zion eschatology reinterpreted in christological terms: Jesus, and not Jerusalem, is the gathering point for the eschatological people of God and the locus of the renewal of Torah" (118). "Jesus himself, and not any mountain on which he ministered, is for Matthew the Christian replacement for Zion. Zion theology has floated free of its Jerusalem moorings to become attached, not—as elsewhere in the Judaism of the period—to another mountain, but to a person. The mountain in Matthew has significance only because Jesus is there" (202).

Excluding Moses typology entirely from Matthew's presentation of the setting of the SM is unnecessary, since Moses typology is one strand of many in the

complex, rich tapestry of NT Christology. The Moses typology is one valid reading among many, not the only reading or the key to Matthew's presentation of Jesus (Kupp 1996, 70). "For a moment, as Jesus stands on the mountain giving the famous sermon, he is Moses. For a moment, answering his critics about his actions on the Sabbath, he is David…. For a moment, healing the sick and raising the dead, he is Elijah or Elisha…. But far more important than flashbacks, than the picking up of detached themes and hints from long ago, is the towering sense of *a single story now at last reaching its conclusion*" (Wright 2012, 72, emphasis in original). That story is the story of God's restoration of his kingdom through Jesus the Messiah.

5.6.2.2 Method of Determining the Theme of the Sermon on the Mount

Non-Mormon scholars have agreed with Welch that the SM contains rich allusions to the temple. Timothy Howell, for example, in his published dissertation on the Beatitudes agreed that both "temple themes and Torah motifs are found specifically in the Sermon on the Mount and the Gospel as a whole" (T. Howell 2011, 46), and he cited Welch's 2009 study among others in support. However, such scholars generally disagree with Welch's conclusion that the SM reflects a temple-centred message or agenda. Howell, for example, argued that in the teaching of the early church "the allegiance once found for the temple was replaced with devotion to Jesus…. For the new community, a restored temple was no option. Jesus was the new temple of Zion" (T. Howell 2011, 52, 53). Just as it is unnecessary to discount any Sinai or temple motif or symbolic allusion in the setting of the SM, it is also unnecessary and would actually be erroneous to deny the presence of significant allusions to the temple in the sayings of Jesus in the SM. The problem with Welch's approach to the matter is that he was forced to stretch the evidence in order to demonstrate not only the presence of such motifs but their dominance, centrality, or unifying function in the SM from start to finish.

A helpful model for understanding the issue here has been set forth by theologian Vern Sheridan Poythress in his book *Symphonic Theology* (Poythress 1987). He suggested that "some themes and subjects are so important in the Bible as a whole that they appear repeatedly. Such themes can clearly be used as perspectives *on any passage of the Bible that we are studying*" (30-31, emphasis added). One example of such a "recurrent theme is the idea of the temple," which is

"one manifestation of the principle that God dwells with his people." This principle takes many forms in the Bible and is not limited to the man-made building. "The whole theme of 'Immanuel,' God with us, may be seen as the broader theme of which the temple is a special case" (31). Other such themes include the holy land, God as king, promise and fulfilment, and suffering and glory. In each case it is possible to "expand a perspective until it encompasses the whole of the Bible or even the whole of life" (32). If Poythress is right, then there is nothing in principle wrong with the exegetical exercise of taking the theme of the temple (or more broadly the theme of the presence of God with humanity) and seeing how reading "the Sermon on the Mount in the light of the temple" (Welch 2009) helps to illuminate that text.

Poythress also explained how to go about engaging in such an exercise without falling into hermeneutical and theological errors. He warned that "exercises in expansion ought never to be an excuse for overlooking, dismissing, or reinterpreting the obvious" (32-33). Specifically, he cautioned that "the most prominent analogies, themes, and perspectives at a given point in a text are obviously the most useful in understanding that particular text" (44). Thus, while it is legitimate to mine the SM for whatever allusions to the temple might be there, one should be careful not to force the text to fit a temple-oriented straitjacket or to make the theme of the temple overwhelm the actual focus or dominant theme and message of the SM. Likewise, one may examine the SM for what it says on such themes as ethics, economics, discipleship, worship, family, salvation, love, holiness, missions, and many other themes, but one should not make the mistake of thinking that the discovery of many possible connections to any one such theme is grounds for viewing it as the dominant or unifying theme of the Sermon as a whole. Just as to a hammer everything looks like a nail, so to an ethicist everything in the SM can look like ethics and to a liturgist everything in the SM can look like liturgy. This does not mean that interpretation of the text is purely subjective, but that the interpreter must be disciplined in looking to the text to set its own agenda through what Poythress called its "most prominent analogies, themes, and perspectives."

Since the purpose at hand is not to discount all temple allusions in the vocabulary of the SM but to show that temple motifs are not the central or dominant feature of the text, it is not necessary here to attempt to examine *seriatim* and in

detail all of Welch's examples. Such an undertaking is impractical in this context since Welch claimed to have identified some 120 temple themes in the SM (Welch 2009, 183-89, especially his table on 184-87). Instead, the Beatitudes will be examined in some detail as a test passage to see which of the two models being compared here (temple-centred versus Messianic-kingdom) best illuminates the passage. The Beatitudes are chosen for four reasons: (1) The Beatitudes begin and set the tone for the SM. (2) Welch devoted an entire chapter of 25 pages to the 10 verses of the Beatitudes (41-65), giving it twice as long a treatment proportionately than the 97 verses in the rest of the SM (67-182). (3) Likewise, 22 of the 120 allusions to the temple in the SM that Welch catalogued come from the Beatitudes, again twice as much proportionately as in the rest of the SM (184-87). (4) The Beatitudes includes what is one of Welch's *strongest* examples of an allusion to the temple (Matt. 5:8, Ps. 23:4 LXX; cf. Welch 2009, 54-55). Following the examination of that test passage, an argument is presented for preferring the view that the dominant theme of the SM is the Messianic kingdom.

5.6.2.3 The Theme of the Beatitudes

Most biblical scholars agree that Isaiah 61 is the primary OT text to which the opening Beatitudes allude (e.g., Davies and Allison 1988, 436-39; Meadors 1995, 155-58; Betz 1995, 113, 121; Lioy 2004, 122-23; Carson 2010, 160; Quarles 2011, 52-54, 56, 61-62; Evans 2012b, 103-106). Isaiah 61:1-3 reveals that the Messiah (the "anointed" one, cf. v. 1) is to function in the three offices of prophet, priest, and king as he proclaims God's message of good news, brings healing and comfort to God's people, and releases God's people from their bondage (Van Groningen 1990, 663). Even here one may see that while the temple and other aspects of Israelite religion associated with it are certainly part of the context, they are only part of it; the Messiah is the ultimate Prophet and King as well as Priest.

Allusions to the entire chapter of Isaiah 61 appear in the Beatitudes. The speaker brings good news "to the poor [*ptōchois*]" (Isa. 61:1, cf. Matt. 5:3) and is sent "to comfort [*parakalesai*] all who mourn [*penthountas*]" (61:2, also 61:3; cf. Matt. 5:4). The speaker assures God's people that they will "inherit the land" (*klēronomēsousin tēn gēn*) once again (Isa. 61:7, see also 60:21; cf. Matt. 5:5). And three times in the passage the speaker announces the blessing of "righteousness"

(*dikaiosunē*, Isa. 61:3, 8, 11) that is coming (cf. Matt. 5:6). In short, the first four Beatitudes all allude to Isaiah 61.

That Jesus intended these allusions to Isaiah 61 receives confirmation elsewhere. Later in Matthew, in response to John the Baptist's query about whether Jesus was the Coming One, Jesus replied: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Matt. 11:4-5). The words "the blind receive their sight…the poor have good news preached" (*tuphlois anablepsin…ptōchoi euangelizontai*) are practically quoting Isaiah 61:1 LXX, "recovery of sight to the blind…to bring good news to the poor" (*tuphloi anablepousin…euangelisasthai ptōchois*). A connection between Matthew 11:4-5 and the Beatitudes is confirmed by the fact that Jesus ends his response with a beatitude: "And blessed [*makarios*] is the one who is not offended by me" (Matt. 11:6). Most of the other miracles that Jesus cites as evidence of his Messianic role are prophetically anticipated elsewhere in Isaiah (26:19; 29:18; 35:5-6; 42:18; cf. Evans 2012b, 234). Further confirmation comes from the first speech by Jesus reported by Luke, in which Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 aloud from a scroll in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:18-19), sat down (4:20, cf. Matt. 5:1!), and commented, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).

Yet Welch omitted any reference to Isaiah 61 in his treatment of the Beatitudes. Instead, for example, he associated the first Beatitude with Psalm 69:32-33, where the Septuagint says, "let the poor [*ptōchoi*] see it and be glad" (68:33 LXX), because earlier the psalmist tells the Lord, "zeal for your house has consumed me" (Ps. 69:9 [cf. 68:10 LXX]). In this way Welch sought to connect the first Beatitude to the temple (Welch 2009, 49; and following him Skinner 2010, 67). Yet one may wonder whether anyone hearing Jesus' statement about the poor in spirit would associate it specifically with Psalm 69, let alone connect it with the temple (note the distance between verse 9 and verses 32-33). In a footnote Welch (2009, 49 n. 33) cited Herman Hendrickx as also connecting Matthew 5:3 to Psalm 69 (Hendrickx 1984, 19-20). However, Hendrickx cited Psalm 69 only as part of the broader OT background; he connected Matthew 5:3 *primarily* to Isaiah 61:1-2, which he pointed out stands behind several Beatitudes (Hendrickx 1984, 14, 19, 21, 25).

As it turns out, on the other hand, Psalm 69 *is* a significant OT text for understanding the *last* Beatitude, in which Jesus says, "Blessed are you when others revile [*oneidisōsin*] you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account [*heneken emou*]" (Matt. 5:11). Compare this statement with the following from Psalm 69 (68 LXX): "Because for your sake [*heneka sou*] I bore reproach [*oneidismon*]….because the zeal for your house consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach [*hoi oneidismoi tōn oneidizontōn*] you fell on me" (Ps. 68:8, 10 LXX [cf. 69:7, 9]). The repeated use of the noun and verb for "reproach" or "revile" (*oneidismos*, *oneidizō*) combined with the use of the phrase *heneka sou* ("for your sake," "on your account") make this a likely allusion in Matthew 5:11. Oddly, Welch completely missed this allusion in his extended discussion of allusions to the Psalms in Matthew 5:10-12 (Welch 2009, 61-64).

The significance of the allusion to Psalm 69 is that it was evidently understood by the Gospel authors as Messianic, as were so many of the Psalms. Psalm 69:21, "They gave me gall for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink" (cf. 68:22 LXX), is found in Matthew 27:34 (and see 27:48); the incident is also mentioned in Mark 15:23 and Luke 23:36, but not with the clear allusion to the psalm. Psalm 69:9, "Zeal for your house has consumed me" (cf. 68:10 LXX, already quoted above), is quoted in John 2:17, where it has both Messianic *and* temple-related significance. Psalm 69:4, concerning "those who hate me without cause" (cf. 68:5 LXX), is quoted by Jesus in John 15:25. Thus any NT allusion to or quotation from Psalm 69, though it may include reference to or significance pertaining to the temple, is interpreting Psalm 69 Christologically, that is, as speaking typologically or prophetically about the Messiah.

One Psalm that is even more pertinent to the opening Beatitudes is Psalm 132, celebrating God's covenant with David. The temple is very much part of the psalm, but the focus is an appeal to God to remember his covenant with David (see especially 132:1, 10-12, 17-18). God's choice of Zion as the place of his habitation (in the temple) is a function of his choice of David and his line (132:13-14). In this context the psalmist says, "Your priests will clothe themselves with righteousness [*dikaiosunēn*], and your devout will rejoice [*agalliasontai*]…. Its pursuits I will bless when blessing; its poor I will feed [*tous ptōchous autēs chortasō*] with bread. Its priests I will clothe with deliverance, and its devout will rejoice with rejoicing

[*agalliasei agalliasontai*]" (Ps. 132:9, 15-16). There are points of contact between these verses in the psalm and four of the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3, 6, 10, 12). Thus the Psalms do provide a rich mosaic of motifs relevant to the Beatitudes, and the temple is part of the picture, but the focus is on the Davidic kingdom which Jesus announces is about to have its fulfilment.

Another passage in Isaiah to which multiple Beatitudes appear to allude comes in an earlier "Servant song," in which Isaiah prophesies (quoting from Brenton's translation of the LXX): "They shall not hunger or thirst [*peinasousin oude dipsēsousin*]…but he who has mercy [*eleōn*] on them will comfort [*parakalesei*] them…. Rejoice, O heavens, and let the earth be glad [*agalliasthō*]…because God has had mercy [*ēleēsen*] on his people, and he has comforted [*parekalesen*] the humble of his people" (Isa. 49:10, 13). As many as four Beatitudes (Matt. 5:4, 6, 7, 12) display verbal similarities with this short passage in Isaiah. Here again, the passage in Isaiah is understood Christologically elsewhere in the NT (cf. Isa. 49:6 with Acts 13:47; Isa. 49:10 with Rev. 7:16-17). Matthew quotes at some length from the opening lines of the first Servant song, making explicit the identification of Jesus as the fulfilment of that Servant (Matt. 12:18-20, cf. Isa. 42:1-3). The allusion to a passage introducing another Servant song in Matthew's narrative introduction to the SM has already been mentioned: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns'" (Isa. 52:7), a text that Paul also cites in reference to Christ (Rom. 10:15). But here one may see also some connections with specific Beatitudes: the servant brings a message of "peace" (cf. Matt. 5:9) and speaks of God's reign as king (cf. Matt. 5:3, 10).

Thus a strong case exists for understanding the Isaiah passages interpreted in the NT as Messianic texts fulfilled in Jesus as the controlling or dominant background to the Beatitudes, especially in the setting as presented in Matthew's narrative introduction to the SM. This does not mean the Beatitudes do not also echo various passages in the Psalms; the clear allusion to Psalm 24:4 (23:4 LXX) in Matthew 5:8 would be an excellent example. In that psalm, David affirms that the pure in heart may go up the mountain of the Lord to the presence of God. The psalm then announces that the King of glory, the Lord himself, is coming (24:7-10). It would be a mistake to pit temple themes against kingdom themes or vice versa here; both

are involved. Another clear allusion to the Psalms is found in Matthew 5:5, which practically quotes Psalm 37:11. But as Craig Evans pointed out, "The appearance of allusions to Isaiah *and the Psalms* in these beatitudes should occasion no surprise when it is remembered that in late antiquity the Psalter was regarded as prophetic" (Evans 2012b, 103, emphasis in original).

Matthew 5:6, in addition to its allusions to Isaiah noted above, also clearly alludes to Psalm 107:5, 9: "Being hungry and thirsty [*peinōntes kai dipsōntes*], their soul fainted within them.… Because he fed [*echortasen*] an empty soul, and a hungry soul he filled with good things" (Ps. 106:5, 9 LXX; see T. Howell 2011, 159). Here again Welch cherry-picked a text alluding to the temple instead of focusing on the most clearly relevant allusion; he connected Matthew 5:6 to Psalm 63:1 ("my soul thirsts for you") due to the reference to the sanctuary in 63:2 (Welch 2009, 53). Again he cited Hendrickx as making this same connection, ignoring the fact that Hendrickx clearly presented Isaiah 61 as the primary allusion and cited Psalm 63:1 only as part of the broader OT background (Hendrickx 1984, 25-26). The point is not to deny some meaningful points of contact between Psalm 63 and Matthew 5:6 but simply to recognize that other OT texts stand comparatively in the foreground.

Two key terms in the Beatitudes are repeated at key junctures: "the kingdom of heaven," mentioned in the first and eighth Beatitude (Matt. 5:3, 10), and "righteousness," mentioned in the fourth and eighth Beatitude (5:6, 10). Attention has already been drawn to the three references to righteousness in Isaiah 61. The repetition of the term in the fourth Beatitude and in the eighth (and last regularly-formed) Beatitude is yet another indication of the primary importance of Isaiah 61 in the Beatitudes as a whole. Given the numerous occurrences of the term in the Septuagint, especially in both the Psalms (82 times) and Isaiah (52 times), there is no shortage of rich thematic connections that can be found through this word alone. Likewise, one can find numerous occurrences of the term "kingdom" (*basileia*) and related terms (king, reign), many of which will exhibit some resonance with one or more of the Beatitudes. Welch mentioned as one such text Psalm 145:11-13, which speaks of the glory of God's "kingdom," and commented that this is a psalm the Jews would have recited in praise to God in the temple (Welch 2009, 50).

Other texts, however, more directly inform the Beatitudes in their context in Jesus' ministry. In Matthew's narrative run-up to the SM, he quotes Isaiah 9:1-2

(8:23-9:1 LXX) as fulfilled in Jesus beginning his ministry in Capernaum by the sea in Galilee (Matt. 4:13-16), with Jesus' first words of public proclamation being the announcement, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (4:17). This statement quite clearly connects this passage with Jesus' opening saying in the SM, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (5:3). Turning to Isaiah 9, one finds this very theme of the coming kingdom in one of the most famous OT Messianic prophecies, concerning the wondrous child (cf. also Isa. 7:14, already quoted in Matt. 1:22-23) who would be born as the ultimate ruler, bringing "peace" and "righteousness" as he rules forever "on the throne of David and over his kingdom" (Isa. 9:6-7 [9:5-6 LXX]). The conjunction of the key terms "righteousness" and "kingdom" in this Messianic context, in a passage already quoted by Matthew, marks Isaiah 9:6-7 as a key text for understanding the significance of the Beatitudes as a group of sayings. The Beatitudes are quite clearly an announcement of the Messianic kingdom that is now, as Matthew 4:17 says, "at hand," about to be inaugurated.

Again, the Psalms are not excluded as providing significant light on the Beatitudes in their context. The same theme of righteousness in the Davidic, Messianic kingdom seen in Isaiah 9 also appears in the Psalms. A well-known example is Psalm 45, in which the Davidic king is (somewhat mysteriously in its original context) addressed as follows: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions" (Ps. 45:6-7; cf. Ps. 44:7-8 LXX). This text is made famous by its full quotation in reference to Jesus as God in Hebrews 1:8-9 (on the translation and interpretation of these texts, see Bowman and Komoszewski 2007, 148-50). Another Messianic psalm, this one attributed to Solomon, prays that God's promises to the Davidic dynasty may be fulfilled: "Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!" (Ps. 72:1-4 [cf. 71:1-4 LXX]). In these four verses the psalm refers to "righteousness" (*dikaiosunē*) three times and to "the poor" (*tous ptōchous*) twice in reference to the

Davidic "king" bringing God's own righteousness on behalf of the poor. Here again, three of the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3, 6, 10) resonate with these verses in a way that directly fits the historical context of Jesus' proclamation and ministry. The centrality of the Davidic, Messianic kingdom as the dominant theme of the Beatitudes is consistent with the fact, noted earlier, that David is the OT figure with whom Jesus is most commonly compared in Matthew.

So far nothing has been said about the fifth Beatitude, which is concerned with mercy (Matt. 5:7). In the OT, mercy is nearly always an attribute of God. This is the case, for example, in all but one of the 150 occurrences of the words for "mercy" (*eleos, eleēō*) and "merciful" (*eleēmōn*) throughout the Greek Psalms. Thus what is distinctive about Matthew 5:7 is the description of the blessed ones as themselves being merciful. The one exception in the Psalms is the statement that David's enemy "did not remember to show mercy [*eleos*] and pursued to death [i.e., "persecuted," *katediōxen*] a person needy and poor [*ptōchon*] and stunned in heart" (Ps. 108:16 LXX [Ps. 109:16]). It is striking that this short verse makes verbal connections with four of the Beatitudes concerning the poor, showing mercy, and being persecuted (Matt. 5:3, 7, 10-11).

Elsewhere Matthew informs us that Jesus cited Hosea as OT support for this idea in his teaching: "For I desire mercy [LXX, *eleos*], not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6 NKJV). Matthew alone reports Jesus quoting the first line of Hosea 6:6 on two occasions (Matt. 9:13; 12:7), just as he alone gives the fifth Beatitude. Jesus' citation of Hosea is ominous: Hosea was explaining why judgment was certainly about to come on the northern kingdom of Israel, and Jesus was likewise anticipating the judgment that would soon come on Jerusalem, including the destruction of the temple where the sacrifices or burnt offerings took place. Thus Jesus' teaching on mercy as exemplified in the Beatitudes does have an important connection with the temple, but that connection involves the judgment that was coming on the Jewish religious establishment and the end of its temple-based system.

Another Beatitude that alludes to Hosea is the one promising the peacemakers that they will be called sons of God (*huoi theou klēthēsontai*, Matt. 5:9). These very words appear in the OT only in Hosea 1:10, where Hosea prophesies that in the place of the condemned people of the northern kingdom of

Israel, an immeasurable number of persons who were formerly not God's people will be called the sons of the living God (*klēthēsontai huoi theou zontos*, Hos. 1:10 LXX). Here again, there is discernible in Jesus' beatitude a warning to his own Jewish people: those among them who do not accept and support the good news of peace that he brings on the mountains (Isa. 52:7) will no longer be God's people (cf. Rom. 10:25-26). This is a far more plausible context for understanding Matthew 5:9 than Welch's claim that it refers to deification of initiates through their temple experience, buttressed with references in the OT to heavenly beings as "sons of God" (Welch 2009, 58-61, citing Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Deut. 32:8; Ps. 2:6-7; 82:6; 89:3-4, 7).

One other OT book merits some attention here: Daniel. Scholars of very different perspectives have agreed that the Book of Daniel was a major influence in the teaching on the kingdom of God in the NT (e.g., Collins 1993; C. A. Evans 2001). Daniel prophesied that "the God of heaven [*tou ouranou*] will set up a kingdom [*basileian*] that shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). This statement about a coming kingdom from the God of heaven is one of the clearest OT antecedents to the NT terms "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven," the latter expression found exclusively in Matthew. Later, Daniel reported a vision in which this final, unending kingdom is given to a mysterious figure described as "one like a son of man":

> I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven [*epi tōn nephelōn tou ouranou*] there came [*ērcheto*] one like a son of man [*huios anthropou*], and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given [*edothē*] dominion [*exousia*] and glory [*doxa*] and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations [Greek, "all the nations of the earth," *panta ta ethnē tēs gēs*], and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom [*basileia*] one that shall not be destroyed (Dan 7:13-14 ESV).

Daniel 7:13-14 is clearly the basis for the title "the Son of Man" (usually articular in the NT, *ho huios tou anthropou*), which occurs 82 times in all four Gospels as Jesus' preferred self-designation (and four times outside the Gospels, Acts 7:56; Heb. 2:6; Rev. 1:13; 14:14). The title appears more often and with greater frequency in Matthew than in the other three Gospels (Matthew, 30; Mark, 14; Luke, 25; John, 13). In Matthew, Jesus claims that as the Son of Man he has the

"authority" (*exousian*) to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6). He speaks of the "kingdom" (*basileias*) of the Son of Man from which evildoers will be removed (13:41). He states that the Son of Man will "sit on the throne of his glory [*doxēs*]" (19:28; 25:31 NRSV). Jesus also refers frequently to the "coming" (*erchomai*) of the Son of Man (10:23; 16:27, 28; 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:64). Specifically, Jesus speaks of the Son of Man "coming in his kingdom" (16:28), "coming on the clouds of heaven [*epi tōn nephelōn tou ouranou*] with power and great glory" (24:30), "seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven [*epi tōn nephelōn tou ouranou*]" (26:64). These last two texts are especially telling as they are obviously quoting directly from Daniel 7:13. The Gospel of Matthew climaxes with Jesus' charge to his disciples, commonly called the Great Commission, which though it does not use the title "Son of Man" clearly draws on the Daniel text. Jesus says there that "all authority [*exousia*] has been given [*edothē*]" to him "in heaven [*ouranō*] and on earth [*gēs*]," and tells the disciples to make more disciples "of all nations" (*panta ta ethnē*) (Matt. 28:18-19). Thus, Daniel 7:13-14 turns out to be one of the most significant OT texts in Jesus' teaching in all of the Gospels, especially Matthew, and specifically in regards to Jesus' teaching concerning the kingdom that he was announcing.

Recognizing the significance of Daniel 7 sheds significant light on the first and eighth Beatitudes, both of which have as their promise, "for *theirs* is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3, 10). There is one OT text that is the likely allusion here: Daniel's prophecy that the everlasting kingdom that will be given to the "one like a son of man" will also belong to "the saints" (Dan. 7:18, 27). The conventional view in liberal critical scholarship that the "one like a son of man" is merely a symbolic representation of the saints (i.e., of the Jews) is both exegetically unnecessary in the context of Daniel and clearly wrong from a NT perspective. Rather, the "one like a son of man" is a divine figure (Bowman and Komoszewski 2007, 246-47) who receives the everlasting kingdom on behalf of and as the personal representative of the saints. In NT teaching Jesus is the fulfilment of both the Son of Man vision and the hope of the Davidic Messiah, with the two motifs united in the Book of Hebrews through the Davidic reference in Psalm 8 to the royal glory and honour bestowed on "the son of man" (Ps. 8:4; Heb. 2:6, 9).

The evidence surveyed here shows rather conclusively that the dominant theme of the Beatitudes is the Messianic kingdom anticipated prophetically in Isaiah, Daniel, and the Psalms. The temple is never far from this theme because it was the central physical location and structure associated with the Jewish religious system. However, the Beatitudes are focused on the announcement of the blessings of the Messianic kingdom, mentioned explicitly in the first and eighth Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3, 10), and drawing on a wealth of OT passages throughout all of the Beatitudes.

Table 33 provides a simple comparison of how the Beatitudes are viewed in Welch's temple-centred model and in the Messianic-kingdom model defended here. The descriptions in the middle column and the OT texts cited in support are all taken directly from Welch's table (Welch 2009, 184) except for the last line which, because it is omitted from his table, is drawn from his earlier exposition (64).

Table 33. Temple-Centred vs. Messianic-Kingdom Models of the Beatitudes		
Beatitudes	**Temple Motif**	**Messianic-Kingdom Motif**
blessed (*makarios*)	celestial beatification (Ps. 1:1, etc.)	Blessed are those who trust in the Son, the Davidic king (Ps. 2:12), who seek God with all their heart (Ps. 119:1-2)
poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3)	beseeching and bowing down (Ps. 69:32)	Good news for the poor (Isa. 61:1), blessed through the Davidic king (Ps. 132:15)
kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:3, 10)	God as eternal king (Ps. 145:11-13)	Good news of the coming of God's reign (Isa. 52:7); kingdom of the Messiah (Isa. 9:6-7), the Son of Man (Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14), given to the saints (Dan. 7:18, 27)
mourn (Matt. 5:4)	sadness over covenant breaking (Ezra 10:6)	Good news: comfort to those who mourn (Isa. 61:2-3; 49:10, 13)
comforted (Matt. 5:4)	comfort and joy (Ps. 94:19)	
meek (Matt. 5:5)	Like Moses, waiting on the Lord (Ps. 76:2-9; Num. 12:3)	God's meek people suffering under the wicked will inherit the land/earth (Ps. 37:9-11; Isa. 61:7; also 57:13; 60:21)
inherit the earth/land (Matt. 5:5)	receiving peace and prosperity (Ps. 37:9, 11, 18)	
hunger and thirst (Matt. 5:6)	needing and seeking righteousness and God (Ps. 37:19; 42:2; 63:1; 107:9)	God will rescue those who hunger and thirst for his help (Ps. 107:4-9; Isa. 49:10)
righteousness (Matt. 5:6)	divine justice (Ps. 17:15)	Messiah will rule in righteousness (Isa. 9:7; 11:4-5; Ps. 45:6-7; 72:1-4); good news of righteousness (Isa. 61:3, 8, 11)
filled (*chortazō*) (Matt. 5:6)	beholding God's glory (Ps. 17:15)	God satisfies the needs of his people, especially through his anointed one (Ps. 107:4-9; 132:15)

mercy (Matt. 5:7)	through covenantal fidelity (Ps. 5:7)	Judgment coming: God desired mercy, not sacrifice (Hosea 6:6)
pure in heart (Matt. 5:8)	entrance and purity requirements (Ps. 24:4)	Psalm of David: The pure in heart may go up the mountain of the Lord (Ps. 24:3-4)
seeing God (Matt. 5:8)	encountering God's glory (Ps. 17:15; 24:6; 63:2)	God is coming as the King of glory to bring salvation (Ps. 24:5-10)
peacemakers (Matt. 5:9)	peace of complete atonement (Ps. 147:14)	Messiah, Prince of Peace, will bring peace (Isa. 9:6-7); on the mountains the good news of peace is proclaimed (Isa. 52:7)
sons of God (Matt. 5:9)	sonship, angels, deified beings (Ps. 2:7; 82:6)	Those who were not God's people will become his children through the gospel (Hos. 1:10)
persecuted (Matt. 5:10, 11)	deliverance from persecution (Ps. 7:1; 31:15; 35:3)	Those who persecuted David and his people will be defeated (Ps. 109:16)
reviled on my account; evil said about them (Matt. 5:11)	imprecations; swearing of oaths (Ps. 119:86, 161)	David was reviled on the Lord's account (Ps. 69:7-9) and false witnesses spoke against David (Psa. 27:12)
rejoice and be glad (Matt. 5:12)	cultic joy, exultation, singing (Ps. 5:11; 32:11)	The saints and priests shout for joy at the righteousness and satisfying of the poor through the Davidic king (Ps. 132:15-16)
reward (*misthos*) in heaven (Matt. 5:12)	source of heavenly rewards (*antapodosis*, Ps. 19:11)	Good news for Zion: God is coming to rule and to bring his reward (*misthos*, Isa. 40:9-10; 62:11)
prophets were persecuted (Matt. 5:12)	Temple priests scoffed at the warnings of the prophets (2 Chron. 36:16)	Jews chastised when they failed to heed the prophets' warnings of judgment (e.g., Jer. 7:25-26; Dan. 9:6, 10; Zech. 1:4)

Most of the evidence for the Messianic-kingdom model summarized in the far right column of Table 33 has been discussed in some detail already. In most cases the OT texts Welch cited in support of the temple-centred model are at best part of the larger background, not texts to which the Beatitudes clearly allude (the exceptions are Psalm 24:3-4 and 37:11, where there is some overlap between the two models). By contrast, most of the OT texts cited in support of the Messianic-kingdom model are texts to which the Beatitudes clearly allude (especially Ps. 69:7-9; 132:15-16; Isa. 49:10, 13; 52:7; 61:1-3; Hos. 1:10). The fact that in several cases three or four of the Beatitudes allude to the same short text (most of all to Isaiah 61) is another reason to favour the Messianic-kingdom model for understanding the OT theological context of the Beatitudes.

5.6.2.4 The Theme of the Sermon on the Mount

It has been shown that the dominant theme of Matthew's narrative setting of the SM (4:17) and of its opening lines in the Beatitudes (5:3, 10) is the Messianic kingdom that Jesus came to inaugurate. A comparatively brief analysis of the SM as a whole will show that the Messianic kingdom is its controlling theme from start to finish. Explicit references to the kingdom appear at critical junctures in the SM: in the first and last regularly-formed Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3, 10), three times at the end of Jesus' general comments about the Torah leading into the six antitheses (5:19-20), at the centre of the SM in the Lord's Prayer (6:10), at the climax of the discourse unit concerning anxiety over material needs (6:33), and toward the end of the SM (immediately prior to the closing exhortation to take the message of the SM to heart) in the warning that not all professed disciples will enter the kingdom (7:21).

Every part of the SM relates in an important way to this theme of the Messianic kingdom announced in the Beatitudes (5:3-12). Those to whom the kingdom belongs are called to live loyally as its subjects, bringing its light to the rest of the world (5:13-16). The Messianic kingdom does not overturn the moral values of the Torah but rather entails their fulfilment (5:17-48). Its religiosity is not about social status and recognition but about honouring the Father in heaven and advancing the cause of his kingdom by doing his will here on earth (6:1-18). Those who would be part of that kingdom must value God's rule and righteousness even over their material needs (6:19-34). Faithfulness to God's kingdom calls for a balance of humility and discernment, trusting God for one's own good and seeking the good of others (7:1-12). The way to God's kingdom is not easy or popular, and some who profess to represent the kingdom are false prophets (7:13-24). The only safe way to God's kingdom is to accept Jesus' message and base one's life on it (7:24-27).

Two of the most important motifs in the SM are righteousness (Matt. 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33) and God as the Father in heaven (5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32; 7:11, 21). As has already been shown, righteousness is explicitly associated in the OT with the Messianic kingdom (Ps. 45:6-7; 72:1-4; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:4-5; 61:3, 8, 11). The same is true of the motif of God as Father, although the specific expressions "heavenly Father" and "your Father in heaven" occur nowhere in the OT. Isaiah begins with the sad declaration that God had called Israel to be his "sons" but they had rebelled against him (Isa. 1:3-4). Toward the end of the book,

the prophet asks God to "look down from heaven" and redeem his people, "for you are our Father…you, O LORD, are our Father" (63:15-16; also 64:8). The fulfilment of this hope for reconciliation to God as Father comes through the Messiah, the descendant of David, honoured as God's "son" and even "firstborn" (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7; 89:26-27). Thus at the end of the SM, Jesus for the first time refers to the Father not as "your" Father but as *his* Father: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). The kingdom of heaven belongs to genuine disciples who honour Jesus as Lord by doing the will of Jesus' Father in heaven. Their entrance into his kingdom as God's sons is dependent on their faithful response to the summons of God's royal Son.

In conclusion, the dominant, central, organizing theme of the SM is the Messianic kingdom that Jesus, the Messiah, has come to inaugurate. The temple is part of the background to this message of the kingdom, but the temple itself is not the focal point of the SM.

5.6.3   Hermeneutical Approaches to the Sermon on the Mount

Welch's case for viewing the SM as a "temple text" rests almost entirely on his cumulative review of possible temple allusions in the words of the SM. Having critiqued this foundation at some length and found it severely lacking, other aspects of Welch's temple-centred model may be assessed with far more brevity.

The theory that the SM is centred on the temple is such a novelty in the history of the interpretation of the SM that some explanation must be given why interpreters have missed it. Welch's answer is that the SM works as a temple text on a "deeper," "holier," "esoteric," "veiled," or "mystagogical" level in which temple meanings are "coded," in contrast to the "obvious, ethical level" of "ordinary moral statements" (Welch 1999, 252; Welch 2009, xi, 42; 2010b, 44).

As precedent for this hermeneutical approach to the SM, Welch argued that Jesus' parables "masked deeper and more esoteric messages from the gazing crowd…intended to be fully understood only by those insiders who had been given ears to hear and eyes to see" (Welch 2009, xi; similarly Welch 1999, 252). He was alluding here to Jesus' citation of Isaiah 6:9-10 to explain his use of parables. In this same context, Welch cited Matthew 13:11 in support of an "esoteric" meaning of the

parables (Welch 2009, 42): "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (Matt. 13:11). However, Jesus' point is *not* that his parables have two meanings, one exoteric for the uninitiated and the other esoteric for the initiated. Rather, the parables are stories that illustrate truths about the kingdom that those who are hard-hearted are not open to accepting. It was "not given" to others not to know the "secrets" of the kingdom, not because those others had not been initiated into the sect, but because they were closed-minded and wilfully, culpably blind to the truth (Matt. 13:13-15). That Matthew does not view the meaning of the parables as esoteric truths to be disclosed only to initiates is evident from the fact that Matthew reports in his Gospel, available for all to read, Jesus' explanation for the disciples of the meaning of the parables (Matt. 13:18-23, 37-43).

In terms of form, a parable is generally a story told to illustrate a didactic point, either an extended metaphor ("A sower went out to sow…," Matt. 13:3) or an extended simile, typically in Jesus' teaching of the specific formulation "the kingdom of God is like…" or "may be compared to" (Matt. 13:24, 31, 33, etc.). For the most part, it should be noted, the SM does not consist of parables, yet parabolic sayings of the extended-metaphor type do appear in several places (Matt. 5:13-16; 5:25-26 [likely]; 6:22-23; 7:6; 7:13-14; 7:16-20; 7:24-27). An esoteric approach to the SM as a whole fails to do justice to the fact that there is both parabolic and non-parabolic material side by side in the SM. What esoteric truth might be encoded in such injunctions as "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (5:44) or "You cannot serve God and money" (6:24)?

Welch was of course on to something in saying that the SM is more than mere moral instruction. Jesus was not a simple teacher of ethics; his message was not one of mere personal moral improvement, social reformation, or political action. However, to interpret the SM as an ethical discourse in such ways does not understand the SM on its most basic or exoteric level, but is rather a *misunderstanding* of the SM. The problem with moralistic interpretations of the SM is not that they are exoteric but that they are superficial misunderstandings of the SM in its historical, religious context of Jesus' life and ministry. Such readings are unable to account for the way Jesus makes himself the issue at critical points of the SM ("on *my* account," Matt. 5:11; "Not everyone who says *to me*, '*Lord, Lord,*' will enter the

kingdom of heaven…. And then *I* will declare to them, '*I* never knew you; depart from *me*…'" (7:21, 23). Moralistic interpretations do not take seriously the meaning of "the kingdom of heaven", which frames the whole discourse (5:3, 10, 19-20; 7:21), in its ancient Jewish religious, theological context. Jesus' disciples are to love their enemies because this is what God is himself doing in the redemptive program of his kingdom; they are not to worry about material things because their first priority is the advancement of the cause of God's kingdom. These are not esoteric statements the meanings of which have been hidden from hearers or readers, or that can only be *fully* understood by initiates through ritual or ceremonial acts in a temple context. Rather, they are statements that are *mis*understood if they are not read in their quite accessible, public context of Jesus' kingdom message.

5.6.4 The Authority of Jesus' Teaching in the Sermon on the Mount

Immediately following the SM, Matthew comments on the reaction of the crowds who had listened: "And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes (Matt. 7:28-29). Welch argued at some length that the "authority" Jesus displayed in the SM was the authority of the temple (Welch 2009, 190-92).

In order to make this argument, Welch rather awkwardly misrepresented the import of Matthew's comment on the people's reaction to Jesus' discourse. Welch stated, citing Matthew 7:28-29, that the people "wondered by what authority he was able to make such statements," and that "by the end of the Sermon, Jesus openly answered that inevitable query" (Welch 2009, 191). Yet it was, according to Matthew, when Jesus had "*finished*" his speech that the crowds were "astonished" at the "authority" with which he had taught. If Jesus had openly answered the crowds' question by the end of his speech, then why would they still be wondering about it? In fact, their wonder or astonishment remained after the discourse had ended.

Welch knew that Jesus during his mortal life on earth was not a member of the Jerusalem priestly establishment and did not have access to the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem temple. He therefore carefully parsed his explanation of the relevance of the temple to Jesus' authority: "By standing on the verbal and theological platform of the Temple, Jesus drew on the authority of the divine place…. Within conventional expectations, it was only because of temple access to

the holy Presence that one could speak in such a way with credibility" (Welch 2009, 191). Presumably what Welch meant is that Jesus, as the divine Son of God, had privileged access to the presence of God the Father. This explanation of Jesus' authority is not so much erroneous (Jesus was, after all, the divine Son, Matt. 11:27; 24:36; 28:19) as it is inadequate. It amounts to suggesting that Jesus spoke with the authority of a priest rather than as a scribe even though he was not in earthly terms recognized by the Jewish establishment as a priest. As noted earlier in commenting on the significance of Isaiah 61:1-3 for the SM, Jesus did function in ways comparable to a priest—*and* a prophet, *and* a king. He was functionally all of these and more.

In what ways did Jesus speak with authority unlike that of the scribes? Jesus claimed that loyalty to *him* was a critical mark of those who would inherit the heavenly kingdom (Matt. 5:11). He claimed that *he* had come to fulfil the Scriptures (5:17). Jesus spoke with supreme confidence, prefacing many of his statements with "Amen" (5:18, 26; 6:2, 5, 16), a word pious Jews typically reserved for the end of a prayer. Finally, he asserted that in the Day of Judgment *he* will determine who will enter that kingdom (7:21-23). This last claim, coming close to the end of the SM and thus shortly before the audience reaction (7:28-29), is especially relevant to understanding their astonishment. Jesus was claiming that he would be sitting on the eternal throne, ruling over the whole world, and exercising judgment on all humanity (cf. Matt. 28:18). In the kingdom of heaven, he was going to be the heavenly King. Jesus spoke with authority as the Messiah King, as the Son of Man, as the divine Son of God come to announce the blessings of the kingdom and destined to bestow those blessings on some and refuse them to others in the Last Day (cf. Carson 2010, 232). This is the real import of Jesus' "authority" and it explains the crowds' astonishment. They had expected a scribe; what they heard was the Son of God.

The true significance of the authority with which Jesus spoke was also missed by LDS scholar Valérie Triplet-Hitoto in her contribution on audience astonishment at the SM and the ST that was presented at the Sidney B. Sperry Symposium on the SM. According to Triplet-Hitoto, the audience at the SM was astonished because first-century Jews in the Old World "had lost an understanding of…continuing revelation" (Triplet-Hitoto 2010, 46). Whereas Welch in effect proposed that the

crowds were surprised because Jesus spoke like a priest instead of a scribe, Triplet-Hitoto in effect proposed that they were surprised because Jesus spoke like a prophet instead of a scribe. The Jews had lost "the concept of continuing revelation" and suffered "the loss of prophetic leadership and revelation…. Among the Pharisees, the interpretation of sacred texts had succeeded prophetic revelation" (47). "The fundamental difference" between Jesus and the scribes is that the authority of the scribes "rested on historical tradition whereas the authority of the Lord rested on revelation" (48). What made Jesus' teaching astonishing was its claim to "direct revelation from heaven" (49).

The fact is that the Jews in Jesus' day were quite aware of the concept of prophets and prophecy, and many of the Jews were not only open to the appearance of prophets but accepted the idea with no trouble. As Matthew himself reports, that John the Baptist was a prophet was a view popularly held at the time (Matt. 11:9; 14:5; 21:26), and for a while the crowds also accepted Jesus as a prophet (Matt. 16:14; 21:11, 46). Prophets had been scarce in Israel for a few centuries, but this was not because of a loss of the concept of continuing revelation. While Jesus' speech is obviously comparable to that of a prophet in some ways, ultimately Jesus transcends that office and category as much as he does that of a priest. Prophets prefaced their revelations with "Thus says the Lord"; Jesus prefaced his revelations with "Amen I say to you." Prophets warned that the Lord would judge the wicked; Jesus claimed that he *is* the Lord who would judge the wicked.

5.6.5   The Structure and Purpose of the Sermon on the Mount

Welch's theory of the SM as a ritual temple-centred text, as developed in his 2009 book on the SM, included the hypothesis that the SM is organized into a series of 25 "stages" in which initiates are "ritualistically guided…stage by stage" in "a logical progression" from the most elementary conditions of discipleship to the perfection required to enter into God's presence (Welch 2009, 183, 188, 192, 206). An outline of chapters 3 through 6 of Welch's book corresponds to this analysis of the progression of the SM (see Table 34).

All but the first of these 25 stages are grouped into three major levels or orders corresponding to the three parts of the Temple, with the third part of the Sermon corresponding to the Holy of Holies (Welch 2009, 157). After opening with

promises of blessings for those who pursue this temple-centred program through to completion (the Beatitudes, Matt. 5:3-12), the first major set of stages leads initiates into a new covenantal relationship with God through the acceptance of its most elementary, mundane requirements or stipulations focusing on interpersonal relationships (5:13-47). Passing through this initial series of stages prepares the disciple to participate in a "higher order" of "cultic instruction" in which the disciple pursues the goal of becoming "perfect" through prayer and other religious acts of devotion associated with the temple (5:48-6:24). The third series of stages of the SM (6:25-7:27) "moves its devotees the final step closer to entering into the innermost presence of God" in a spiritual "ascent," with promises of tremendous blessings if they continue faithfully as well as dire curses on those who fall back or away (Welch 2009, 157).

Table 34. John Welch's 25 Stages of the Sermon on the Mount
Chapter 3: Hearing a Temple Register in the Beatitudes (41-65)
Stage 1. Blessings are promised, 5:3-12 (45-65)
Chapter 4: The Creation of a New Covenantal Relationship (67-113)
Stage 2. Becoming the salt of the earth, 5:13 (67-71)
Stage 3. Letting there be light, 5:14-16 (71-76)
Stage 4. Renewing the commitment to keep the law of the covenant, 5:17-20 (77-83)
Stage 5. Prohibition against anger, ill-speaking, and ridicule of brethren, 5:21-22 (83-86)
Stage 6. Reconciliation of all animosities, 5:23-26 (86-89)
Stage 7. Commitment to sexual purity and fidelity in marriage, 5:27-32 (89-98)
Stage 8. Oaths to be sworn by saying "Yes, yes" or "No, no," 5:33-37 (98-104)
Stage 9. Do double-good and pray for all people, including enemies, 5:38-47 (104-111)
Stage 10. A promise of gifts of sun and rain as blessings from heaven, 5:45 (111-13)
Chapter 5: A Higher Order of Righteousness and Consecration (115-55)
Stage 11. Transition into a higher order, 5:48 (116-20)
Stage 12. Giving voluntarily to the poor, 6:1-4 (120-23)
Stage 13. Order of prayer, 6:5-13 (123-33)
Stage 14. Forgiving and receiving forgiveness, 6:14-15 (133-35)
Stage 15. Fasting, washing, and anointing, 6:16-18 (135-42)
Stage 16. Requirement to lead a life of consecration and singleness of heart, 6:19-24 (143-55)
Chapter 6: Blessings and Consequences of Righteousness or Unrighteousness (157-82)
Stage 17. Promised blessings of physical care and glorious clothing, 6:25-34 (157-64)
Stage 18. Preparing for the realities of the judgment, 7:1-5 (165-67)
Stage 19. A curse on those who breach confidentiality, 7:6 (168-70)
Stage 20. An answer to a threefold petition, 7:7-8 (170-71)
Stage 21. Giving good gifts as does the Father, 7:9-12 (171-73)
Stage 22. Entering through a narrow opening that leads to life, 7:13-14 (173-75)
Stage 23. Recognizing and bearing the fruits of the tree of life, 7:15-20 (175-78)
Stage 24. The privilege of entering into the presence of the Lord, 7:21-23 (178-79)
Stage 25. Concluding admonition to build upon the rock, 7:24-27 (179-82)

As should be clear by now, the plausibility of this complex hypothesis is directly and inevitably dependent on the cogency of the thematic analysis of the

vocabulary and contents of the SM through which Welch sought to demonstrate that temple motifs are pervasive throughout the text and reveal the temple as the controlling and unifying theme of the whole. Since there are major methodological and exegetical weaknesses in that thematic analysis of the SM, the structural analysis of the SM in terms of 25 temple-centred stages is *a priori* implausible.

Additional considerations also bring Welch's three-part, 25-stage analysis of the SM into serious question. Welch interpreted Matthew 5:48 as a transitional statement that "invites the hearers to move on in becoming perfect even as God is perfect" (Welch 2009, 115) while also recapping the requirements of the preceding verses. That is, Matthew 5:48 supposedly is both retrospective, summarizing what has gone before, and prospective, looking ahead to the next stage (116). But this attempt to have it both ways does not work. Matthew 5:48 is clearly the conclusion of the six antitheses (and especially of the sixth). This is evident in several ways. The exhortation to "exceeding" (*perisson*) love and being "perfect" in 5:47-48 bring the hearer full circle back to the summons just before the antitheses to have righteousness that "exceeds" (*perisseusē*) that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20; cf. France 2007, 228-29). The conjunction *oun* ("therefore") in 5:48 is naturally retrospective, and in none of its other twelve occurrences does it function to introduce a new section of the discourse. From a source-critical perspective, Matthew 5:48 is clearly the end of a discourse unit, since Matthew 5:39-48 so closely parallels the distinct unit of Luke 6:27-36 within the SP. And finally, Matthew 5:48 will not fit as a prospective statement concerning what follows because this function is precisely performed by Matthew 6:1, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven," which functions in effect as a header for Matthew 6:2-18 (see above, §5.4.4.3 and Table 28). In short, Matthew 5:48 does summon disciples to a "higher" righteousness, but not in the sense that they are invited to advance to a higher level than that of a beginning disciple; rather, God requires a quality of righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Welch's outline treats Matthew 6:25-7:27 as the final major division or part of the discourse. This part of his analysis suffers from two serious difficulties. The first is that it involves treating 6:19-24 as belonging to what precedes in 6:1-18. However, the literary or rhetorical analysis of Matthew 6:1-18 (just mentioned above) definitely

demonstrates a tight unity of that part of the SM. Furthermore, the issues raised in 6:19-24 just as clearly belong with what immediately follows: concern for material, earthly things must not take precedence over concern for God and his heavenly blessings (compare 6:19-20, 24 with 6:25-34, especially 6:33). The second difficulty for this part of Welch's theory is that Matthew 7:13-27 clearly functions as the conclusion of the speech (see above, §5.4.4.5 and Table 29). Welch's analysis ignores the strong evidence supporting the view that Matthew 5:17-20 and 7:12 form the opening and closing sayings of the main body of the discourse (see §5.4.4.3).

The problems with Welch's theory go beyond the matter of errors in outlining the discourse. Most fundamentally, Welch's analysis of the SM involves artificial distinctions between the supposed different stages of the speech as well as flagrant misinterpretations of the meaning of specific discourse units. His misunderstanding of Matthew 5:48 has already been mentioned.

A relatively simple example of an artificial distinction concerns Welch's treatment of Matthew 6:14-15, in which Jesus warns that the Father will forgive only those who forgive others. Welch tried to argue that this teaching represents a higher level of righteousness than what came before in Matthew 5:23-24, where, he said, the disciple was only required "to know that your brother or sister holds no hard feelings against you." Now in 6:14-15 the disciple must purge any "residue" of "incomplete forgiveness" (Welch 2009, 134). Yet Matthew 5 not only instructs disciples to seek reconciliation with their brethren but also to *love their enemies* (5:44-47). It is implausible to suggest that forgiving other people of their wrongdoing represents a higher order of righteousness than loving one's enemies. Already in one of the Beatitudes, Jesus had set forth the same idea as in 6:14-15 in other words when he said that the merciful would be shown mercy (5:7). Likewise, it is difficult to see how the Golden Rule of treating others as one would like to be treated (Matt. 7:12), coming in the supposedly third part of the SM, could be regarded as a higher level of spirituality than loving one's enemies or doing such acts as giving the shirt off one's back to an oppressor (5:40).

An instance of a serious misreading of the text in relation to the ritual stages appears in Welch's treatment of Matthew 6:16-18 (Welch 2009, 136-42). Welch found in this passage a triad of religious ritual acts—fasting, anointing, and washing—performed as acts of consecration in possibly "some ritual of initiation"

(141-42). This interpretation simply ignores the direct, forceful contrast Jesus draws between the hypocrite who puts on a gloomy face to be seen by others (Matt. 6:16) and the disciple who anoints his head and washes his face so no one will realize he is fasting (6:17-18). The anointing and washing cannot be part of a religious temple ritual and at the same time escape detection by other people! Thus, in this context "the disciples' washing and anointing are part of the everyday bodily care which were sometimes forgone as part of the self-affliction involved in fasting" (France 2007, 255). Nor is Jesus inculcating fasting as part of a religious regimen to purify oneself in order to progress further toward spiritual perfection.

The structure of the SM has nothing to do with a temple-oriented program of progressive spiritual development or advancement. Its structure began with a simple sermon preached by Jesus in Galilee, probably looking much like the SP (Luke 6:20b-49), that was then expanded into a lengthier and more rhetorically complex discourse by the Evangelist. The structure of the discourse is the result of the fusion by the author of discourse units from Jesus' teachings on various occasions, all thematically relevant to the original message that Jesus had given on the historical occasion indicated in the narrative. The author, his sources, or both have employed rhetorical devices familiar to them in their first-century Jewish culture, especially the arrangement of material in threes (some of which of course go back to Jesus, who was himself a Jewish teacher), in order to present the sayings of Jesus in a memorable and unified manner.

5.6.6   The Genre of the Sermon on the Mount

Welch argued that the SM "was either used in early Christianity to prepare people to enter into a covenant to obey the commanded teachings of Jesus Christ or, perhaps, as a reflection of a very early Christian ritual ascent text through which people progress stage by stage until they can be admitted into the Lord's presence, as is seen especially in 3 Nephi 11-18" (Welch 2010a, 313). The latter interpretation of the genre of the SM is the view Welch advanced in his 2009 book.

What has been said to this point is sufficient to show that the SM was unlikely to have been composed as a ritual or ceremonial text. The theory that the SM functioned as something like a catechesis is perhaps somewhat more plausible, but it still faces serious difficulties. The SM is not organized like a systematic review of

basic beliefs and requirements for converts to faith in Jesus Christ. There is no direct explanation of who Jesus was, what early Christians were expected to believe about him, or for that matter any reference to the Holy Spirit, baptism, or other basic elements of instruction that might be expected in any work of such purpose.

To support a ritual-oriented or temple-centred understanding of the SM, Welch reviewed "ten characteristics" of ritual or ceremonial texts that he culled from various secondary works in ritual studies. These include such characteristics as "transformation from one religious status to another," "setting forth a social order," "sacred setting," "interpersonal experiences," and "celebration" (Welch 2009, 199-202). Welch related most of these characteristics to the SM through generalizing them so far that they might apply to *any* religious text (even his own!). For example, Jesus' use of "salt, light, cheeks, and coats," among other mundane things, to teach "profound religious principles," in effect "imbues the ordinary occurrences of daily life with sacred import" (200). But does anyone, in any context, teach religious principles without talking about mundane things? Discoursing on matters pertaining to "social order" and "interpersonal experiences" likewise occurs all the time outside of cultic, liturgical, ritual, or ceremonial contexts—or even religious contexts.

The view of the SM as a literary anthology or collection of some of Jesus' kingdom teaching based on a historical speech he gave remains the best understanding of the genre of the SM (e.g., Lioy 2004, 92; Keener 2009a, 162). By "anthology" here is not meant to deny that the SM was based on a specific historical speech (cf. Bock 1994, 931-36), but rather a compilation of thematically related sayings of Jesus, in this case expanding Jesus' original speech and shaping it into a finished literary composition. Although elements of the SM were later put to use in catechetical and liturgical contexts (most notably of course the Lord's Prayer), the SM was never itself a ritual or ceremonial text, nor was it an ascent text.

5.6.7   Jesus and the Temple

If the SM was a "temple text," yet Jesus was not part of the temple establishment in Jerusalem, why would Jesus produce such a temple text? Welch's answer was that the SM was "written at an early time when Jesus and his followers were still hoping for a restoration, reform, and rejuvenation of the Temple, not its destruction or obsolescence" (Welch 2009, 211). When it became clear that the

Jerusalem temple would be destroyed, the early church understood Jesus to have established "a new temple system" for which "the old Temple" would one day be "rebuilt" as a "new temple" for "all people, whether Jewish or not" (217). Thus the SM was a reflection of "Jesus' program of temple renewal and restoration" (217-18).

The evidence of the entire NT, including Matthew, is that early Christianity was never interested in reclaiming the existing temple or in any future project of building a new temple. Jesus' own "agenda" was the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom in which the man-made temple would be replaced by that which it at best typified, the unmediated presence of God among his people. This can be seen in the theology of all of the major authors of the NT writings. The apostle Paul taught that the church was the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16-18; Eph. 2:19-22; cf. also Gal. 2:9). The same idea appears in the first epistle of Peter (1 Peter 2:4-10) and is implicit in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 3:12). John presents Jesus as the new temple (John 1:14; 2:19-22; 4:21-26), making passé all arguments about which temple or on which mountain people should worship God (John 4:21). The Book of Hebrews announces that the entire old covenant system of temple, priests, and sacrifices has been made obsolete by the sacrifice of Jesus the Son of God (Heb. 7:11-8:13) and invites every believer in Jesus Christ "to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh" (Heb. 10:19). This invitation refers not to entrance into a man-made temple or sanctuary but rather approaching the presence of God in prayer through the one Mediator, Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:16; 9:15).

The evidence briefly surveyed here shows that for all of the NT writers, "the Temple had become superfluous as a locus of the divine presence *even if it continued to offer the language by which that divine presence in the world could be articulated*" (Rowland 2005, 481, emphasis added). This is an important point: the presence of temple *language* in the SM and other parts of the NT does not attest to a belief in a continuing need for the temple or its rituals. The Christians represented by the NT writings saw Jesus "as the culmination of all the types, rituals, and festivals connected with the Jerusalem tabernacle and temple. In a manner of speaking, he is the shrine incarnate…greater than and supreme over all the religious institutions, practices, and beliefs connected with the various Israelite shrines" (Lioy 2010, 136).

In the Gospel of Matthew, the locus of the presence of God is no longer the man-made temple in Jerusalem but is the person of Jesus Christ. He is "God with us" (Matt. 1:22-23). He is present wherever two or more gather in his name—location and building do not matter (18:20). He is with his disciples to the end of the age (28:20). "By these means Matthew asserts in a distinctive way that Jesus as 'God with us' was the embodiment in his own person of that which previously had been signified by the *shekinah* in the Jerusalem Temple" (Walker 1996, 31).

Jesus' claim to be greater than the temple (Matt. 12:6) comes in the context of his call for Israel to find the eschatological Sabbath rest in him (Matt. 11:28-12:8; Beale 2004, 178). That claim to be greater than the temple "implies not only that the current temple has in some sense been made redundant on his coming, but also that the functions typically predicated of that temple have now been either transcended or devolved onto Jesus himself" (Perrin 2010, 60). At the same time, the imagery of the church being built on "this rock" (Matt. 16:18) intimates that Jesus' disciples "are on their way to becoming the temple" (Perrin 2010, 60). Jesus' action in the temple (Matt. 21:12-13), commonly called the "cleansing" of the temple, also marks it as on its way to becoming obsolete (see, e.g., Bryan 2002, 206-235). It was *false witnesses* who testified that Jesus claimed that he would build another temple building in place of the one that would be destroyed (Matt. 26:60-61).

It was shown earlier that Matthew 28:18-20 alludes to Daniel 7:13-14, the text concerning the everlasting kingdom and authority that would be given by the Ancient of Days to "one like a son of man." The Great Commission text in Matthew 28:18-20 also alludes to 2 Chronicles 36:23, which happens to be in effect the end of the Hebrew Bible, just as Matthew 28:18-20 comes at the end of the Gospel. Whereas Cyrus had sent the Israelites back to Jerusalem ("go up") to rebuild the temple, Jesus was sending his disciples out to all nations to build the eschatological "temple" "composed of worshippers throughout the earth" (Beale 2004, 176-77), that is, of the worldwide fellowship of disciples in which Christ's presence (cf. Matt. 28:20) would be enshrined.

The impending obsolescence of the Jerusalem temple with the coming of the Messiah and his kingdom presence and power is reflected in the SM itself. To be sure, Jesus did not condemn the temple or its rituals in the SM. His references to the altar in Matthew 5:23-24 and to Jerusalem as "the city of the great king" in 5:35

presuppose the divine origin and authority of the Mosaic covenant and its priesthood system whose activities were centred in the temple. While they still stood—and especially while Jesus was still living on earth prior to his redemptive sacrificial death—the continued validity of the temple system was unchallenged, even if the priestly aristocracy in control came under fire. Yet a shift away from the temple-centred religion of the old covenant is already being anticipated. Jesus stands on a hill in Galilee and proclaims the good news of the kingdom that traditionally was expected to find its centre on Mount Zion. Jesus' disciples, wherever they happen to be, are the city on a hill (Matt. 5:14). The rock on which the house of his disciples is to be built is the rock of his teaching (7:24-27). N. T. Wright commented on this ending parable to the SM: "The real new Temple, the real house-on-the-rock, will consist of the community that builds its life upon Jesus' words. All other attempts to create a new Israel, a new Temple (remember that Herod's Temple was still being completed in Jesus' lifetime), a pure or revolutionary community, would be like building a house on the sand" (Wright 1999, 46-47).

5.6.8 Concluding Assessment of the Temple-Centred Model

In all seven aspects of the SM explored in this study—its setting, themes, interpretation, authority, structure, genre, and agenda—a Messianic-kingdom model proves superior to a temple-centered model for understanding the Sermon as a whole. Although Welch's study is valuable for showing that the temple is among the many rich themes of the SM, the temple motif is not its long-lost hermeneutical key.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has examined critical issues pertaining to the text and composition of the SM that will be of direct importance to the question of the historical authenticity of its counterpart, the ST, in the Book of Mormon. The first of these issues was the Greek text of the SM, focusing on identifying those places in the text where the extant manuscripts exhibit variations in wording (called variants) that would affect its translation and interpretation. Specific attention was given to one of these, "without a cause" in Matthew 5:22, that figures prominently in discussions of the text of the ST.

The second major issue treated here was that of the composition of the SM. It was determined that the SM and the SP (in Luke 6:20b-49) were two versions of the same historical speech. It was further shown that in all probability Matthew expanded on Jesus' speech by augmenting it with other sayings and discourse units from Jesus' teachings on other occasions, as shown by comparisons with the parallel discourse units in Luke. This means that Matthew, though not the author of the individual statements in the SM, is at least the final author of the composition known as the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew arranged the materials from his other sources of Jesus' teaching around the original Galilean speech into a coherent, rhetorically effective discourse. Numerous examples of Matthew's literary activity and editorial work in the SM were given.

The third issue addressed here is whether John Welch's theory that the SM was composed, in effect, by Jesus himself as a temple or ritual text is cogent enough to warrant overturning the conventional view of the SM as Matthew's expansion and redaction of Jesus' Galilean speech. The foundation of Welch's theory is his claim to find temple-centred allusions pervasively throughout the SM. This claim was tested and found wanting; the SM has many thematic and verbal connections to Jewish religious, theological, and moral concepts and matters associated with the temple, but it has only scattered allusions demonstrably and pointedly related to the temple. Other subsidiary aspects of Welch's case for the SM as a pre-Matthean temple text were also critiqued and the theory as a whole found to be quite implausible. This means that the conclusion stands that the SM, in the form found in Matthew, must be attributed in large measure, in terms of its specific wording and its arrangement and literary features, to the work of the Evangelist himself. In turn, as will be demonstrated directly in chapter 7, this finding poses a serious objection to the authenticity of the ST in the Book of Mormon, since the ST follows so closely the order and wording of the SM.

Before addressing the critical issues concerning the ST as a specific part of the Book of Mormon, however, some attention must be given to issues pertaining to the Book of Mormon as a whole, comparable to those issues discussed in chapter 4 concerning the Gospel of Matthew. The Book of Mormon, then, will be the subject of the next chapter.

6 INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF MORMON

6.1 Critical Issues in the Book of Mormon and the Sermon at the Temple

The question that is the focus of this study is whether the Sermon at the Temple (ST) in the Book of Mormon represents an authentic, historical sermon preached by Jesus in the Americas. This question cannot be answered without some understanding of various issues pertaining to the Book of Mormon as a whole.

Methodologically, the question of the authenticity or historicity of any part of the Book of Mormon is not easily or simply divorced from the more general question of its authenticity or historicity as a whole. If nothing else, one's view of the whole creates certain expectations with regard to its parts and involves some presumption of whether the *onus probandi* rests on its defenders or its detractors. At the same time, an assessment of any one part, such as the ST, can influence one's view of the whole of the Book of Mormon. The principle at work here is a variation on the "hermeneutical circle," familiar in biblical studies as well, in which one's interpretation of the whole influences one's interpretation of the parts and vice versa (Soulen and Soulen 2011, 85; cf. Stein 1994, 33).

Any resolution to this potential dilemma must be pragmatically feasible as well as intellectually defensible. On the one hand, it is both unrealistic and methodologically unworkable to suspend judgment about any part of the Book of Mormon or about the whole until one has thoroughly considered all of the global issues and definitively examined each and every part. On the other hand, forming a settled conclusion about the whole based solely on difficulties pertaining to one part, even if those difficulties are severe, may be fairly judged an exercise in hasty generalization. The approach taken here is a kind of *via media* between these two extremes. Global issues pertaining to the origins, nature, and credibility of the Book of Mormon are briefly addressed, especially with an eye to their potential significance for the ST as the focus of the study. The examination of these global issues involves some brief consideration of other specific parts of the Book of

Mormon as needed to illustrate the approach taken to the ST. The treatment of these global issues, though by no means definitive or exhaustive, provides a rationale for the general perspective toward the whole of the Book of Mormon reflected in the assessment of the historical authenticity of the ST. In this way, the study is always aiming at the focal point of the specific passage that is its main subject but in such a way that the larger issues relating to the Book of Mormon as a whole are not neglected.

Thus, just as this study gave consideration to various issues pertaining to the Gospel of Matthew as a whole (chap. 4) before examining issues specifically concerning the Sermon on the Mount or SM (chap. 5), so now issues of critical importance to the Book of Mormon as a whole are considered here (chap. 6) before addressing the specific problems of relevance to the ST (chap. 7). Indeed, the issues addressed in this chapter parallel those addressed in chapter 4 with regards to Matthew.

The first issue to be considered in this chapter is what can be known about the origins of the text of the Book of Mormon. The questions here include what can be known about the gold plates on which its original text was reportedly inscribed, about its language or languages, and about Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon. All these questions are of obvious importance not only to one's view of the Book of Mormon as a whole but also to one's approach to interpreting the language of a specific part of the Book of Mormon such as the ST.

Then there are questions regarding the geographical, historical, and religious context or contexts in which the Book of Mormon should be understood. Here the issue is whether the Book of Mormon reflects an ancient culture—specifically, as conservative Mormons generally argue, a culture of people of Israelite heritage living in ancient Mesoamerica—or the modern culture of Joseph Smith's early nineteenth-century Protestant Yankee environment. This issue is of relevance to the ST inasmuch as it purports to be a record of a speech made by Jesus to Nephites, an ancient people of Israelite heritage living in the Americas eighteen centuries before Joseph Smith. There is also the hypothesis that the Book of Mormon in some ways reflects both ancient and modern contexts, a compromise view favoured by some scholars within the LDS academic and apologetic community.

A third issue of special importance to the present study is the use of other parts of the Bible in the Book of Mormon. One of the best-known features of the Book of Mormon is its inclusion of over two dozen chapters of the Bible, for the most part nearly verbatim as they appear in the King James Version (KJV). (The specific edition of relevance here is the 1769 edition of the KJV, the one generally in circulation and use at the time of Joseph Smith.) This issue is of obvious and direct relevance to the present study, which focuses on the critical significance of the close relationship between the ST and the biblical SM with regards to the origin and historical authenticity of the ST. To put the question of whether the ST is literarily dependent on the SM in a broader context, therefore, attention is given to the question of the use of the Bible elsewhere in the Book of Mormon. One rather specialized yet critical area of study directly relevant to this question of the use of the Bible in the Book of Mormon is Book of Mormon onomastics—the origins of person and place names in the Book of Mormon. One section of this chapter presents evidence that Book of Mormon names reflect significant dependence on the Bible.

The fourth and last general category of global issues may be described as literary-critical issues, of which three are given direct attention in this chapter. Brief consideration of the genre or genres in the Book of Mormon and of its overarching structure gives some reasons for thinking that the Book of Mormon is modern rather than ancient in its composition. Finally and climactically there is the issue of what sources were used in the Book of Mormon (beyond the indisputable use of the Old Testament), specifically its use of the New Testament (NT). Here again, considering the Book of Mormon's possible use of the NT elsewhere provides a broader context within which to assess the question of the relationship of the ST to the SM.

The chapter finishes with a preliminary response to the question of the authorship of the Book of Mormon: was it authored by different ancient authors and simply translated by Joseph Smith (via divine inspiration), or was it authored by Joseph Smith?

Each of these introductory critical issues regarding the origins, contexts, sources, and composition of the Book of Mormon is worthy of thorough academic research and analysis beyond what can be developed in this chapter. Nevertheless, answering these questions concerning the Book of Mormon as a whole not only provides a preliminary assessment of its historical authenticity as an ancient

collection of scriptures, but also establishes a broad context of understanding for the study of the ST within the Book of Mormon.

These issues pertaining to the Book of Mormon are approached in this chapter from the evangelical critical methodological stance set forth in chapter 3 and applied in chapters 4 and 5 to Matthew and more particularly to the SM. That is, the treatment of these issues assumes as given shared beliefs of evangelicals and Mormons as to the existence of God and angels, the factual, historical truth and paramount importance of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the divine inspiration of the Bible, and the possibility of divine revelation. The practical significance of these shared beliefs for this study is that the argument does not assume *a priori* that Joseph Smith could not have seen an angel, or that Jesus Christ could not have appeared to Nephites after his resurrection, or that the Book of Mormon could not be a divinely inspired translation of an authentic ancient scripture. Rather, this study challenges those claims through a critical historical inquiry that assesses those claims from within a worldview context of belief in the basic supernatural elements of Christianity.

6.2 Texts and Versions

As thoroughly discussed in chapter 4, there is a consensus among both believers and nonbelievers that the Gospel of Matthew was written by a Jewish Christian in or near Galilee or Syria, certainly in the second half of the first century and probably between AD 60 and 85, and that it was written originally in Greek though probably reflecting the Aramaic speech of Jesus in its quotations of his sayings. The history of the Greek text of Matthew and of the many other language versions has been tracked in detail through the centuries from early fragments in the second century all the way to the present.

By contrast, the views of Mormons and non-Mormons concerning the origins of the Book of Mormon are as wide apart as any contrasting opinions might be. For believing Mormons, the Book of Mormon originated as a record of Nephite prophets written on gold plates in an ancient unknown language with affinities to both Hebrew and Egyptian between about 600 BC and AD 400 and which was translated into English by Joseph Smith in 1828-1829 by divine inspiration (e.g., Bennett 2009; Nibley 1988a; Parry, Peterson, and Welch eds. 2002; Reynolds ed. 1997). For non-

Mormons, the Book of Mormon originated as a nineteenth-century English composition produced by Joseph Smith utilizing the English Bible and perhaps other modern sources (e.g., Cowdrey, Davis, and Vanick 2005; Marquardt 2005, 77-210; Persuitte 2000; Tanner and Tanner 2010; Vogel and Metcalfe 2001; Wunderli 2013).

This section addresses directly what is arguably the most fundamental question in the debate over the origins of the Book of Mormon, namely, the question of the origin of its text. The historical issues here are complex and vigorously contested. Throughout this section and those that follow in this chapter, care is taken to distinguish between established facts generally acknowledged by believing Mormons and interpretations of or inferences from those facts.

6.2.1 Joseph Smith and the Gold Plates

According to Joseph Smith's own account as accepted in traditional Mormon belief, the original-language text of the Book of Mormon was written down just once, on one physical object: a set of gold or golden plates bound together with writings on other plates as a single multi-volume collection. Whereas Matthew was copied in Greek many thousands of times and was translated into new languages in each century since its original composition, no copies of the Book of Mormon in whole or in part were ever made, and none of it was ever translated into any other language until fourteen centuries after it was completed in the early fifth century. Moreover, that one ancient set of writings on gold plates is not available to be seen by mortal eyes. The earliest version of the Book of Mormon available for anyone to read or study is the English translation Joseph Smith says he was inspired to produce in 1828-1829. Thus, consideration of the origins of the Book of Mormon and of its historical authenticity is really impossible apart from a consideration of what can be known, if anything, about the gold plates.

6.2.1.1 Sources

As it is impossible to assess the authenticity of the Book of Mormon without inquiring about the gold plates, it is also impossible to investigate the issues pertaining to the gold plates without engaging equally controversial historical and biographical questions regarding Joseph Smith. Before doing so, it will be helpful to

say something about the major primary sources of relevance to Joseph Smith, the gold plates, and the production of the Book of Mormon.

Although several collections of primary sources have been published, two stand out. The first is the five-volume set *Early Mormon Documents*, edited by former Mormon writer Dan Vogel (hereafter *EMD*), which provides the text of numerous written statements from Joseph Smith and his contemporaries as well as various other relevant documents. The other collection is *The Joseph Smith Papers* (abbreviated *JSP*), a definitive collection of photographs and texts of drafts and manuscripts of Joseph's histories, journals, revelations, and inspired translations, penned by his scribes and occasionally by Joseph's own hand. It is published by the Church Historian's Press (and thus carries the LDS Church's official recognition) and runs to seven volumes so far.[3]

The best-known though incomplete account of Joseph Smith's early visions and activities leading to the publication of the Book of Mormon is an excerpt from Joseph Smith's autobiographical account in a short work known as *Joseph Smith–History*, part of the LDS scriptural collection called the Pearl of Great Price. Since this is the official, religiously authoritative account for Latter-day Saints, careful consideration must be given to what it says.

The longer account from which Joseph Smith–History is excerpted went through a complicated process of various drafts and revisions which Joseph produced, mostly by dictation to different scribes. An early, incomplete draft was produced in 1832, about half of which was written in Joseph's own handwriting, and was unknown to the public until its discovery in the LDS Church Historian's Office by a BYU student who published the text of the document in his 1965 Master's thesis (Cheesman 1965, 77-94; see *EMD* 1:26-31; *JSP–H1*, 3-22). In 1838, Joseph made a fresh start in producing his *History* with his close associate Sidney Rigdon, though

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[3] The volumes in the *JSP* series are not numbered sequentially. Because each volume has several editors and three volumes appeared in 2011 and two in 2012, it would be both cumbersome and confusing to cite these works in the usual author-date style. Instead, the *JSP* editors' own citation form is used here, with some adaptations. Likewise, the abbreviation *EMD* is used in citations from the set edited by Vogel, following widespread, established convention in LDS-related scholarship. See the Abbreviations List at the beginning of this work for complete bibliographical information on these publications.

the draft they produced that year is not extant. The main manuscript was produced in 1839, mostly as written by Joseph's scribe James Mulholland, with some revisions made during the next couple of years (*EMD* 1:54-144; *JSP–H1*, 187-463). This *History* was first published serially as "History of Joseph Smith" in the LDS newspaper *Times and Seasons* in the 1840s. The excerpt entitled Joseph Smith–History was first published in that form seven years after Joseph's death in an 1851 British collection of Joseph's revelations called *The Pearl of Great Price* (Richards 1851), a revised version of which was adopted by the LDS Church in 1880 as one of its four "standard works" or scriptures. The longer 1839 manuscript with revisions was published later still in edited form in the first volume of LDS scholar B. H. Roberts's multi-volume history (Roberts 1902, especially 1:1-80).

The analysis that follows takes as its point of departure the 1839 *History*, particularly in its authoritative form in the LDS scripture Joseph Smith–History (JS-H), but considers what this and other texts say in a historically critical fashion.

6.2.1.2 Treasure-Seeking, Seer Stones, and Magic

Joseph Smith claimed and Mormons believe that an angel identified as the resurrected prophet Moroni, the last author of the Book of Mormon, revealed to Joseph the existence and location of the gold plates and enabled him to dig them up and eventually to take temporary possession of them. However, this religious account of Joseph's acquisition of the plates is complicated if not contradicted by the historical evidence that Joseph was engaged in treasure-seeking activities during the period in which he reported finding and receiving the plates. In order to understand the issues here, Joseph's own account of the matter needs to be reviewed (for what follows, see JS-H 1:14-59; cf. *JSP–J1*, 212-37).

According to Joseph Smith's standard history, his first visionary experience actually was a vision in the woods near his home in Manchester, New York, of the Father and the Son, both of whom appeared to him in bodily form in the spring of 1820 when Joseph was only fourteen years of age (JS-H 1:14-20). After he told others about his "first vision," as Mormons later began calling it, Joseph says he was mercilessly and continuously subjected to persecution for it (1:21-27).

Continuing in the same narrative, the angel Moroni first appeared to Joseph three years later in his bedroom on September 21, 1823 (JS-H 1:27-33). Moroni told

Joseph about the "gold plates" (1:34) and about an apparatus called the Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two stones set in silver bows and that connected to a breastplate, all of which were deposited with the plates to be used to translate the book written on the plates (1:35). Joseph says that Moroni told him that "the possession and use of these stones were what constituted 'seers' in ancient or former times" (1:35). Moroni let Joseph know that it was not yet time for Joseph to get the plates, though Joseph was given a vision in which he could "see the place where the plates were deposited" (1:42). The angel left and returned twice more that night with the same message and again during the following day, September 22 (1:44-49). Following that fourth visitation, Joseph says he went to the spot on a nearby hill where Moroni had told him the plates were buried and found them with the Urim and Thummim and the breastplate "in a stone box" under a large stone (1:50-52). The angel told Joseph that he would need to return on that same day of September 22 each year for further instruction and preparation until 1827, when he would be permitted to obtain the plates (1:53).

Meanwhile, in October 1825 Joseph had, he says, gone to live in the home of Josiah Stowell as a hired hand. Stowell had learned about a silver mine supposedly located in Harmony, Pennsylvania, just across the state line (the town is now called Oakland). Joseph reports, "After I went to live with him, he took me, with the rest of his hands, to dig for the silver mine, at which I continued to work for nearly a month, without success in our undertaking, and finally I prevailed with the old gentleman to cease digging after it. Hence arose the very prevalent story of my having been a money-digger" (JS-H 1:56). While Joseph was working for Stowell, he met Emma Hale, whom he married on January 18, 1827 (1:57). Because of his continued testimony to his vision, Emma's family opposed the marriage, and the couple were married out of town and went to live with Joseph's father where he worked on the farm (1:58). Later that year, Moroni allowed Joseph to take the plates and the other objects on September 22, 1827 (1:59).

There are several issues of significance in this account, but the one that will be addressed here immediately is Joseph's explanation of how he came to be reputed as "a money-digger" (JS-H 1:56). The fact is that Joseph was heavily engaged in "money-digging" throughout most of the period from 1822 to 1827—the very period during which he later claimed he was in frequent contact with Moroni

concerning the gold plates. Dan Vogel has documented the various occasions on which Joseph was involved in money-digging operations, the locations where he did so, and the other persons involved. During the years 1822 to 1825, Joseph had been part of efforts to find buried treasure on at least six different farms in the area around his home, beginning with several efforts on his own family's farm (Vogel 1994, 198-212). In most of these digs, the treasure for which Joseph and his associates were digging was usually specified to have been gold, with silver sometimes also being mentioned. This means that Joseph had been engaged in "money digging" for a full three years or longer when Josiah Stowell approached him about the expedition to find the lost silver mine. Thus, Joseph's claim that the story of his having been a money digger arose from one short-lived effort at the end of 1825 is quite misleading.

Worse still, Joseph's account omits the most controversial aspect of his participation in money-digging: his claim to be able to locate buried treasure using a "seer stone." Seer stones were fairly well-known objects in early America; they were small, usually rounded stones with a hole or aperture in the middle that were used in divination, especially to locate lost treasure or other objects. Joseph would put such a stone in his hat, place his face into the hat to block outside light, and report details about the treasure and its location that he claimed to see by or through the stone. Stowell hired Joseph for his silver mine quest, not to perform the manual labour of digging, but to use his reputed gift with the seer stone to locate the mine. When Stowell met Joseph in October 1825, Joseph's activities "as a treasure seer were well known" (Vogel 1994, 213). Joseph's statement that it was after he went to live with Stowell that Stowell took Joseph, "with the rest of his hands, to dig for the silver mine," seems worded to give the impression that Joseph was simply one of the hired hands on the Stowell property taken along on the expedition. In fact, Joseph was hired by Stowell specifically to guide the company's search using his seer stone. According to Joseph's mother Lucy, Stowell hired him because he had heard that Joseph "possessed certain keys, by which he could discern things invisible to the natural eye" (*EMD*, 1:309-310). Mormon scholars acknowledge that these "keys" refer to Joseph's seer stones (Bushman 2005, 48; Ashurst-McGee 2006, 42).

Shortly after the failed silver mine expedition, Joseph's claim to be able to locate buried treasure using a seer stone became a matter of public record.

Stowell's nephew Peter G. Bridgman brought charges against Joseph as "a disorderly person and an imposter," a charge based on a New York statute that included in the broad category of disorderly persons anyone "pretending…to discover where lost goods may be found" using some type of "crafty science," that is, occultism (Marquardt 2005, 67-68). Joseph was subjected to a pre-trial "examination" before Justice Albert Neely in South Bainbridge in March 1826 to determine whether a full trial was warranted. According to Neely's court record, Joseph acknowledged that he had a stone that he used "occasionally" for three years to locate lost items and buried treasures, including several times for Stowell (68). Stowell testified in Joseph's behalf, as did a man named Jonathan Thompson; both men explained that they believed Joseph's ability to locate buried treasure with his stone was genuine (69-71).

Justice Neely's finding was that Joseph Smith Jr. was "guilty," but what happened afterward is uncertain because some of the court documents are at present not extant. Apparently Joseph's case was not taken to formal trial, either because he was released (perhaps due to his age) or had escaped and the matter was not pursued further (Marquardt 2005, 72-73). Regardless of the precise final disposition of the case, the testimonies given in court confirm "that young Smith had for several years earned part of his livelihood by hiring out as a glass looker to locate hidden treasures by gazing into his seer stone" (73).

Joseph Smith's use of seer stones to search for buried treasure is directly relevant to the subject of the Book of Mormon. As has already been mentioned, Joseph claimed to find the Book of Mormon during the very period when he was engaged in treasure hunting. According to his account, he first saw the gold plates in 1823 and was able to take them into his custody in 1827; the historical evidence shows that Joseph was involved in treasure-seeking ventures from at least 1822 (and perhaps earlier) until 1827. If Joseph did unearth a cache of gold plates in a hill near his home, that would of course be a rather spectacular find of buried treasure.

More important still, Joseph's claim that an angel showed him the location of the plates but at first would not allow him to remove them reflects very specific folklore in his culture regarding the use of seer stones to search for buried treasure. In the Anglo-American folk beliefs of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, buried treasure was thought to be guarded by demons, ghosts, or spirits—especially

the spirits of the men who had buried the treasure. As Mormon scholar Mark Ashurst-McGee explained, "Frequently, treasure-guarding ghosts were either the spirit of the person who had hidden the treasure or the spirit of a person who had been killed and deposited with the treasure to watch over it" (Ashurst-McGee 2006, 44). The seer stones facilitated contact with the treasure's supernatural guardian.

Bushman acknowledged that the story of Moroni must have "sounded like" the familiar stories about "the spirits who stood guard over treasure in the tales of treasure-seeking" (Bushman 2005, 50). Ashurst-McGee admitted that "Joseph Smith may have understood Moroni to some extent as a treasure guardian" but sought to relegate this understanding to "a secondary level of meaning" in comparison to the traditional view that Moroni was an angel functioning as a messenger of divine revelation (Ashurst-McGee 2006, 39). He argued that Joseph's story, though it included elements of the treasure-guardian paradigm, was primarily about an angel conveying divine revelation and that his critics misrepresented Joseph's experience as nothing more than a treasure-guardian story for their own polemical purposes (76-77). Much of the debate over whether the entity that revealed the plates to Joseph was originally understood as an angel is moot because, as Ashurst-McGee himself pointed out, in the folklore of the period "treasure guardians and angels are not necessarily mutually exclusive beings" (Ashurst-McGee 2006, 48). Ashurst-McGee concluded "that Joseph Smith's encounters with Moroni are best understood as the visits of a heavenly messenger to a prayerful seeker" (76). Specific features of the story, however, beyond the fact that it concerns buried treasure guarded by a supernatural being, confirm that treasure guardian-spirit folklore played a far more significant role in the original context of the story than Ashurst-McGee admitted.

(1) *The reported acquisition of the gold plates took place in the context of several years of the Smiths' treasure-hunting*. This is the obvious facet of the story that connects Moroni and the plates with Anglo-American treasure-seeking folklore.

(2) *In the treasure-seeking lore of Joseph Smith's day, buried treasure was commonly guarded by a supernatural being*. The fact that in all versions of the story Joseph found the gold plates through communication with a supernatural being of some kind links it to treasure-hunting beliefs of Joseph's day. On the other hand, the idea of an angel coming from heaven to reveal a scriptural record buried in the

ground was not a familiar idea in the Christian religious tradition. In this regard, then, the story of the angel and the gold plates reflects treasure-seeking folklore.

(3) *The story of the angel and the plates features the seemingly redundant three separate visits of the angel to Joseph in one night* (JS-H 1:30, 44, 46-47), a motif that turns out to have been commonly associated with both treasure-hunting and ghostly visitations (Quinn 1998, 139, 141). Readers today will be familiar with this motif especially from a slightly later story, Charles Dickens's classic *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens 1843). The best Ashurst-McGee could muster in response to this evidence was to point out that dreams, visions, and threes occur in the Bible as well (an extremely weak point) and to cite the apostle Peter's vision of unclean animals, which he said was "a thrice-repeated vision" (Ashurst-McGee 2006, 90). However, Peter did not have three visions; Luke states that the voice spoke to Peter three times during the one vision (Acts 10:13-16). Furthermore, Moroni's appearances were supposedly literal, personal visitations, not visions in a dream or trance state, as Acts 10:10 indicates was Peter's experience (on visitations versus visions, see below, §6.2.1.3). The experience of three separate visitations in the night from a supernatural being concerning buried gold plates is simply too obviously a motif stemming from the contemporary treasure-guardian folklore. Even Ashurst-McGee admitted that he cannot exclude "the possibility that Smith viewed his three nocturnal visions of Moroni in a treasure-seeking context" (90), even though he argued (implausibly, as just explained) that Joseph might have viewed those visions in a biblical religious context as well.

The connections of Joseph Smith's encounters with Moroni and finding of the gold plates with contemporary folklore about buried treasure, guardian spirits, and seer stones are suggestive of the role of magic in the emergence of the Book of Mormon. The extent to which Joseph and his family were influenced by magical beliefs and practices is one of the most contentious issues in the historical study of Mormon origins. At one extreme is the view of excommunicated Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn, according to whom the Smiths were actively engaged in all sorts of magical activities and thoroughly imbued with a "magic world view" (Quinn 1998). At the other extreme is the view of some Mormon apologists that magic played essentially no role whatever in Joseph Smith's life, a position at least implicit in the work of William J. Hamblin (e.g., Hamblin 2004).

Most of the statements about Mormon origins from Joseph Smith and other Mormons date from 1829 and later, by which time Joseph was clearly speaking of himself and his work in prophetic categories. The Book of Mormon, which Joseph produced in 1829, clearly condemns magic (Mormon 1:19; 2:10) and specifically sorcery, witchcraft, and soothsaying (2 Ne. 12:6; Alma 1:32; 3 Ne. 21:16; 24:5). Joseph certainly presented himself as a prophet, not as a magician. As Hamblin rightly pointed out, "Joseph Smith never called himself a magician, sorcerer, occultist, mystic, alchemist, kabbalist, necromancer, or wizard" (Hamblin 2004, 8). However, the question is not whether Joseph thought of himself as a magician (even prior to 1829) but whether the Book of Mormon originated in a context significantly influenced by magical folklore.

The *Anchor Bible Dictionary* describes magic as "a form of communication involving the supernatural world in which an attempt is made to affect the course of present and/or future events by means of ritual actions (especially ones which involve the symbolic imitation of what the practitioner wants to happen), and/or by means of formulaic recitations which describe the desired outcome and/or invoke gods, demons, or the spirits believed to be resident in natural subsistences" (*ABD*, 4:464). In magic, material objects or physical actions are thought to function as instruments of supernatural, preternatural, or mystical power in the hands of a human adept at or trained in using them. The power is accessed by using the right kind of objects or paraphernalia and performing the right actions according to very specific instructions and under the right conditions. Whereas in biblical religion God has the freedom to deny or to approve a request however well or poorly presented, in magic the desired result comes automatically as long as the proper procedure is carried out to the letter; failure is always due to some mistake or imperfection in the process used by the practitioner (cf. Van Dam 1997, 122-25). Ritual uses of such objects as amulets, astrological charts, charms, potions, rings, rods, seer stones, sigils, and talismans for the purpose of obtaining supernatural knowledge or power are thus commonly classified as magical, as are such ritual actions as conjurations, enchantments, fortune telling, incantations, necromancy, scrying, and spells.

Both Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. were undoubtedly involved in using "mineral rods" in search of treasure, a form of divination which should be distinguished from the more venerable practice of using rods in "dowsing" for water, which they also

reportedly did. The use of a rod in divination appears to be specifically condemned in the OT: "My people consult a piece of wood, and their divining rod gives them oracles" (Hosea 4:12 NRSV, cf. also HCSB, NASB, NET, NIV). The Smiths' use of the rod was part of a tradition in New England that also included Oliver Cowdery. Some Mormon scholars have acknowledged the place of the rod in the Smith and Cowdery families, though emphasizing its use in dowsing while downplaying its use in treasure-hunting (e.g., Gardner 2011, 65-68). Joseph actually mentioned Oliver's use of the divining rod in a revelation directed to him in 1829 when he was serving as the scribe as Joseph dictated the translation of the Book of Mormon. As originally published in the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, this revelation states that Oliver had the "gift of working with the rod," which was called a "rod of nature" (*BC* 7:3). In the 1835 edition of Joseph's revelations entitled *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter-day Saints*, both of these expressions were changed to "gift of Aaron" (D&C 8:6-7; see Bench 2009, 12, for the complete texts of the two versions). Between these two editions, as LDS scholar Ashurst-McGee acknowledged, E. D. Howe's 1834 book *Mormonism Unvailed* had "ridiculed the Smiths' use of divining rods and seer stones" (Ashurst-McGee 2000, 8 n. 22). Ashurst-McGee said that the change "explained to earlier members that Oliver's rod was like Aaron's rod in the Bible" (8), but this rationale is weak, since Aaron's rod was not a divining instrument (see Exod. 7:9-20; 8:5, 16-17; Num. 17:2-10). It would have been easy enough to *add* such an explanation, if that was the intent, but instead Joseph *replaced* the references to Oliver's rod. Here again, as with Joseph's 1839 account of his obtaining the plates, Joseph suppressed evidence of the magical, treasure-hunting context in which the Book of Mormon was produced.

Of course, the use of seer stones is the most obvious and best established example of Joseph Smith's use of magic. By his day there was a well-established tradition of seers who used special stones to communicate with spirits or angels and to find lost goods or buried treasure. They were typically small enough to be held easily in one hand or, as was a customary method, placed inside one's hat. Several other individuals in Palmyra had seer stones, most notably Sally Chase. A neighbour's description of Sally's method is typical—and it corresponds exactly to eyewitness descriptions of how Joseph Smith used his seer stones: "She told me she would place the stone in a hat and hold it to her face, and claimed things would

be brought to her view" (Quinn 1998, 41). The idea was to block out all outside light by placing one's face in the hat, at which point the stone would magically or supernaturally illuminate in some way, perhaps revealing an image of a missing object or the location of buried treasure. Joseph at one time and another possessed at least three different seer stones and perhaps five or six (Ashurst-McGee 2000, 7).

The historical evidence shows that Joseph Smith's use of seer stones took place in a broader context of activities fairly described as magical in conception and legitimately characterized as superstitious. Mormon historian Richard Bushman admitted, "The Smiths were as susceptible as their neighbors to treasure-seeking folklore. In addition to rod and stone divining, the Smiths probably believed in the rudimentary astrology found in the ubiquitous almanacs" (Bushman 2005, 50; cf. Bushman 1984, 72). LDS scholar Marvin Hill could say as far back as 1990, "Now, most scholars, Mormon or not, who work with the sources, accept as fact Joseph Smith's career as village magician" (M. Hill 1990, 72). But since the supposed discovery of the gold plates took place within this magical, folklore-laced context of treasure hunting, seer stones, and a supernatural treasure guardian, it follows that such is the original context of the emergence of the Book of Mormon. This conclusion is not driven by "an assumption that everything in Mormonism must owe its origins to an evolutionary process" (Ashurst-McGee 2006, 70), but arises simply by considering the elements of the story of its origins in its historical, cultural context.

Already it should be evident that scepticism concerning Joseph Smith's story of the revelation of the Book of Mormon is not limited to the story's inclusion of supernatural elements such as the appearance of an angel. The supposed revelation of the gold plates is imbedded in a story of divining rods and seer stones, of treasure-hunting and a treasure-guarding supernatural entity, elements that in his later accounts and revelations incorporated into the Mormon scriptures Joseph sought to suppress as much as possible. In turn these treasure-seeking elements are imbedded in a broader cultural context of folklore and magic that the vast majority of people today, including most Mormons, recognize as lacking in credibility.

Another reason why Joseph's activity of seeking treasure using seer stones is relevant to the Book of Mormon is that he used seer stones when dictating what he claimed was a supernaturally given translation of the Book of Mormon. More will be said on this point below in discussing the method of translation.

6.2.1.3 The Angel Moroni and Joseph Smith's Visions

As has just been observed, Joseph Smith's account of the angel Moroni revealing to him the location where the gold plates containing the Book of Mormon were buried engenders scepticism for reasons quite apart from any general scepticism regarding angels or the supernatural. Beyond the issues involving treasure-hunting and magic, Joseph's claims to religious visions typically strike non-Mormons, including traditional Christians, as quite fantastical. Putting the matter that way, however, invites the complaint that such an assessment is purely subjective. In order to address the issue more objectively or critically, therefore, in this section Joseph's claims concerning Moroni will be put into the broader context of the totality of his reported supernatural encounters.

A significant distinction should be made at the outset that is useful if not always easy to apply in specific instances. Joseph's reports of seeing supernatural personages may be classified into two categories, which will here be called visitations and visions. As defined here, a *visitation* is an event in which a heavenly being literally becomes physically present on the earth and is visible to a person's natural eyes. A *vision* is an event in which a mortal human being on earth has an experience in his mind (whether awake or asleep) of seeing heavenly beings (or other non-earthly realities). In a vision (in this narrow sense), the heavenly beings are understood not to make a literal physical or personal visit to the earthly figure having the experience. LDS scholar Brent L. Top acknowledged the usefulness of this distinction when he writes, "While visitations are often considered visions, the distinction could be made that visions are seen in the mind and understood by the power of the Spirit, while visitations occur when heavenly ministrants appear in person to a mortal" ("Visions," in Millet, Olson, Skinner, and Top 2011, 654).

According to the reports that come directly from Joseph Smith himself, the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph numerous times from 1823 to 1829. All of these encounters are presented in such a way as to suggest they should be classified as visitations (so Top, "Visions," in Millet, Olson, Skinner, and Top 2011, 654). Joseph evidently never stated how many such visitations Moroni made, but a review of the accounts shows that Joseph claimed to have seen Moroni on about fifteen different occasions (counting the three visitations of the first night as one occasion).

Surprisingly, given the emphasis in Mormon teaching on the initial visitations to reveal and release to Joseph the gold plates, a majority of these visitations (eight of the fifteen) would have taken place *after* Joseph said he obtained the gold plates (cf. B. L. Smith 1993, 182-83), during a period of little more than a year (June 1828-June 1829). Except for the appearances to the Three Witnesses (see below, §6.2.1.4), all of these visitations were to Joseph Smith alone.

The first thing to be said about these visitations of Moroni to Joseph Smith is that the sheer number of them is implausible. A survey of people in the Bible who saw angels (or the "angel of the Lord") reveals that angelic visitations were an extremely rare part of the religious story of even the most renowned human beings (Boa and Bowman 2007, 91). The statement just made includes an important qualification, since it is important to avoid arguing fallaciously from silence. It is certainly possible that various individuals had numerous encounters with angels that for whatever reason did not become part of the story of their role in the religious history of Israel in the Old Testament or of the church in the New Testament. The point being made here is that angelic visitations of relevance to the religious story of the Bible happened generally one to three times in the life of any one individual. Even Jesus had only two encounters of angels important enough to be reported in any of the four Gospels (Mark 1:13; Luke 22:43). Yet Joseph Smith supposedly had at least *fifteen* encounters with the angel Moroni!

Adding to the far-fetched nature of the many visitations of Moroni to Joseph is the fact that Joseph also claimed to have seen many other supernatural figures (cf. B. L. Smith 1993, 184-86). Those attested clearly in Joseph's own accounts include many other angels (on several different occasions); John the Baptist; the apostles Peter, James, and John; Michael identified as Adam; Michael the archangel; the devil or Lucifer; Moses, Elias, and Elijah (despite the fact that *Elias* is simply another form of the name *Elijah*), Gabriel identified as Noah; Raphael; and, not to be missed, God the Father and Jesus Christ! The appearance of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith in 1820, known as the First Vision, is itself historically dubious (see Palmer 2002, 235-68), not to mention theologically problematic.

Setting aside the legitimate theological and historical-critical objections one might cogently raise to many of these alleged encounters, the sheer proliferation of them in addition to the already unprecedented number of alleged appearances of

Moroni is enough to warrant at least some measure of scepticism. Again, one need not be predisposed to disbelieve *all* stories of encounters with supernatural beings to be warranted in disbelieving *some* stories. Not all visionaries are equally credible.

In addition to the above general concern about the number of visitations, Joseph Smith's account of Moroni's first visitation to him bears specific, close examination. According to the canonical account, Joseph was praying at night when a light appeared in his room and "continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday" (JS-H 1:30). The angel then spoke to Joseph at length, reappearing two more times in the same manner, keeping Joseph awake most of the night (1:30-31). Yet Joseph shared his bedroom, and even his bed, with some of his brothers. In an article in the LDS magazine *Ensign*, Donald Enders described the Smith log cabin as "a one and one-half story structure with two rooms on the ground level and 'a garret above divided into two apartments'" (Enders 1985). "The chamber above the two rooms probably served as sleeping quarters for most of the Smith children." A bedroom was added in 1821 as the children became older, but even so, at the time of Moroni's first visitation the log house was "home to parents and nine children" (Enders 1985), with room for at most three beds to accommodate the seven boys. Thus, Joseph shared one small bedroom with at least four and probably five of his six brothers, and in fact must have shared a bed with one or two of them.

This fact renders the scene described by Joseph fifteen years later highly implausible, since he claims that the angel's presence made the room as bright as mid-day and that the two of them engaged in conversation three separate times throughout the night (cf. Chandler 2003, 54). Even Bushman indirectly acknowledged the problem when he explained that Joseph's first vision (in 1820) took place in the woods because there was "no hope of privacy in the little cabin filled with children and household activity" (Bushman 2005, 39).

An unprecedented element of Joseph's stories of subsequent encounters with Moroni is that several of the meetings are scheduled or prearranged. Again, no human being in the Bible is ever informed as to when he or she will see an angel. Yet Joseph claimed that the angel prearranged for them to meet at the same location on the same night of the year for four successive years following their initial visits (JS-H 1:53-54, 59). In addition, according to Joseph's mother Lucy, when the angel took the plates away in June 1828 as punishment for allowing the manuscript

of the translation to be lost (more on that later), the angel arranged to return them if Joseph was "sufficiently humble and penitent"—on the following September 22 (L. Smith 1845, 89). Adding to the questionable nature of these prearranged visits is that they are said to have occurred each year on September 22, which happens to be the autumnal equinox (the precise day varies from year to year between September 22 and 23). Given the evidence already discussed that Joseph Smith's story of finding the Book of Mormon was imbedded in a cultural context of magical folklore, it is quite plausible to see some sort of astrological significance to the selection of the autumnal equinox as the date for these annual meetings with the angel (e.g., Quinn 1998, 144). In any case, prearranged meetings with an angel on any date are unprecedented and raise some legitimate suspicion as to whether the visitor, if there was one, was really an angel sent by God.

6.2.1.4 Witnesses to the Gold Plates

Whether Joseph Smith saw an angel named Moroni or not, the question of whether he had in his custody for two years a set of gold plates inscribed in an ancient language would seem to be a straightforward enough matter. Either he had the plates or he didn't. However, not only did Moroni visit Joseph Smith alone to tell him about the plates, but Joseph reportedly removed the plates from the ground alone (with his wife remaining some distance away with the wagon they were using) and apparently either returned them to Moroni alone or buried them somewhere.

Even so, one would think Joseph could have easily satisfied people with regard to this question by simply showing them the plates during the two years he had possession of them. Yet until just before he professed to relinquish the plates, Joseph refused to let *anyone* look at them. His own wife Emma was *never* permitted to see them. The scribes who took dictation for Joseph as he was supposedly translating the gold plates were also not permitted to see the plates throughout the process. For that matter, as will be explained below, Joseph himself never looked at the plates while translating them (see §6.2.1.9).

Although Joseph would not let people see the gold plates, he allowed them to hold or lift them as long as they were wrapped or covered in some way. There are reports that Joseph would allow people to lift the plates kept inside a pillowcase or in a cherry box or in some other way covered (e.g., *EMD*, 2:203, 306, 309). These

individuals were able to guess at the weight and dimensions of the plates but were unable to see them. No plausible explanation has ever been given for why the plates—presumably in physical terms simple inanimate objects composed of metal—were not allowed to be visible to Joseph's family and closest friends and supporters during those two years, yet they were allowed to hold them as long as they were covered. What made the gold plates different, spiritually or theologically speaking, from the Great Isaiah Scroll or any of the other thousands upon thousands of biblical manuscripts that may be viewed in museums and libraries all over the world—and that scientists and scholars may touch and physically examine at will? For that matter, what made the gold plates different from the papyri scrolls that the LDS Church purchased in 1835 and that Joseph claimed contained a four-thousand-year-old scripture written by the hand of the patriarch Abraham himself?

It is perfectly understandable why Joseph Smith would not have granted access to the gold plates to strangers, critics, or neighbours who may have considered the plates a potential source of wealth. It is neither understandable nor credible that God would not allow Joseph to show the plates to his wife, his parents (themselves the subjects of various visionary experiences), his financial supporters, or his scribes.

Joseph's supporters and scribes felt the same way, naturally, and Joseph eventually made it known that the Lord was going to allow a few of them to see the gold plates. Around the end of June 1829, shortly after Joseph finished dictating the translation of the Book of Mormon, two groups of men were permitted on separate occasions to see the plates (see, e.g., *JSP-H1*, 551). Their statements affirming that they had seen the plates are found at the beginning of all printed editions of the Book of Mormon and are known as the *Testimony of Three Witnesses* (hereafter TTW) and the *Testimony of Eight Witnesses* (TEW).

As with practically everything else pertaining to the Book of Mormon, there has been considerable controversy regarding the testimonies of these eleven men. Richard Bushman conceded, "The claims of the witnesses were nearly as incredible as the existence of the plates…. The witnesses were no substitute for making the plates accessible to anyone for examination, but the testimonies showed Joseph—and God—answering doubters with concrete evidence, a concession to the needs of

post-Enlightenment Christians" (Bushman 2005, 79). However, "concrete evidence" that is devoid of credibility is not really evidence at all.

6.2.1.4.1 The Three Witnesses

There is no contemporary account of the experience of the three witnesses. The TTW, their formal statement testifying to their experience, says nothing about the day, time of day, location, or other circumstances of the event. The Three affirmed that "an angel of God came down from heaven," presenting the plates to them, and that they saw "the plates" and "the engravings" on them. The Three also testified that they knew that the plates had "been translated by the gift and power of God" because "his voice hath declared it" to them, so that they knew "of a surety that the work is true." Particularly noteworthy in this testimony is the emphasis on *how* the Three saw and knew these things. It was, they said twice, "through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ" that they saw the plates, which were shown to them, they said, "by the power of God, and not of man."

These statements in the TTW suggest that the experience was not a simple matter of the three men seeing the angel and the plates in the normal fashion with their physical eyes. Statements in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine & Covenants about the Three Witnesses also suggest that some type of spiritual sight was involved. The Book of Mormon states that "the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it save it be that three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered" (2 Ne. 27:12; see also Ether 5:2). In the March 1829 revelation concerning Martin Harris, Joseph Smith states regarding his possession of the plates that the Lord "will show these things" to three chosen witnesses; "I will give them power that they may behold and view these things as they are; and to none else will I grant this power" (D&C 5:11, 13-14). The June 1829 revelation for the Three repeatedly emphasizes that they need to have complete faith in order to see the plates (D&C 17:1-5).

At this point a grave difficulty with the official story emerges for which Mormons do not seem to have yet offered even a plausible solution, if they have even noticed the problem. All of the statements cited above emphasize and insist that the Three were only able to see the plates "by the power of God," by his grace, and because they had faith. The plates were "hid from the eyes of the world" and

could not be seen by anyone except by God's special granting of such ability by his power and grace to those with sufficient resolve and faith. Yet according to Joseph's own account, it was necessary for Joseph to make great efforts to keep people from stealing the plates. In the scriptural account of Mormon origins Joseph stated that Moroni warned him "that if I should let them go carelessly, or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them…they should be protected" (JS-H 1:59). *Ensign*, the primary official magazine of the LDS Church, published an article in 2001 documenting the lengths to which Joseph apparently went to keep people from finding and stealing the plates (Hedges 2001). Yet if only those who had faith could see the plates, and only then by the power of God, why was it necessary to hide or cover the plates at all? Why must Joseph hide the plates in boxes and in a barrel of beans if the plates are hidden by God from the eyes of the world and can be seen only by his power?

Beyond that logical inconsistency, there is the theological difficulty of understanding *why* faith would be necessary to see the plates. Normally, faith is not needed to see metal plates, papyrus scrolls, stones, spectacles, swords, or other physical objects. Of course, it might be necessary to have faith in order to accept that such objects are vehicles of divine revelation, but that is not the issue here. Joseph clearly stated both in the Book of Mormon and in Doctrine and Covenants that the witnesses would not be able to see the plates at all unless they had faith and unless God permitted it and gave them the ability to see them by his power.

Harris's testimony that he saw the angel and the plates must be considered in the context of his religious experiences outside this one event. To say that Harris was religiously and spiritually unstable would be an understatement. "Before becoming a Mormon, he had been a Quaker, Universalist, Restorationist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and perhaps Methodist" (Palmer 2002, 176). Even friendly accounts from individuals who knew and liked Harris described him as "a great man for seeing spooks," "slightly demented," and a "visionary fanatic" (Vogel 2002, 94).

It is true that Harris also reported that on more than one occasion he was allowed to hold and "heft" (lift) the plates while they were covered, thus being able to make a guess as to their dimensions and weight. Not only Harris, but most or all of the eleven witnesses stated later that they had done so, and a few others outside the eleven also made such statements. It is therefore important to note that the

question is not whether Joseph Smith at some point had in his possession metallic sheets of some kind. Presumably he did acquire something that fit the general dimensions and description of gold-colored plates. If these really were ancient gold plates inscribed by Nephite prophets in hieroglyphic script, though, the testimony of the Three falls short of confirming any such thing.

From a Mormon perspective, of course, the authenticity of the plates is confirmed not so much by the Three seeing the plates but by their seeing the angel. Here again, the visionary nature of the experience becomes relevant. David Whitmer also made statements in the years that followed the TTW that indicate that he also regarded his experience as a spiritual vision, not a physical encounter. Between 1874 and 1888, when he died at the age of 83, Whitmer gave dozens of interviews to LDS Church leaders, newspapers, and various writers (see *EMD*, 5:15-226). Several of these interviews indicated a spiritual visionary understanding of the 1829 experience. When John Murphy asked Whitmer in 1880 to describe the angel, Whitmer replied that "it had no appearance or shape" and that he saw "nothing, in the way you understand it"; the experience consisted of "impressions" (*EMD*, 5:63). This statement and others (see *EMD*, 5:140-41, 149, 166, 170, 193) suggest that he had a powerful visionary experience of some kind, albeit while still conscious.

The assumption being made in the analysis so far is that the witnesses ought to be granted at least a provisional assumption of their sincerity. On the basis of that assumption it may be reasonable to conclude that the Three likely had some sort of religious, spiritual experience that they interpreted to be a vision of the angel and the gold plates. On the other hand, the possibility should at least be entertained that one of the Three was a willing party to a deception orchestrated by Joseph Smith. The most likely candidate for such an accomplice would be Oliver Cowdery. By all accounts of persons both friendly and hostile to Mormonism, Harris and Whitmer were probably sincere if spiritually gullible.

6.2.1.4.2 The Eight Witnesses

Soon after obtaining the TTW from Cowdery, Whitmer, and Harris, Joseph Smith granted to eight more men the privilege of being witnesses to the Book of Mormon. All eight of the men were members of the Smith and Whitmer families. Joseph's father Joseph Sr. and brothers Hyrum and Samuel were included. Four of

David Whitmer's brothers—Christian, Peter Jr., Jacob, and John—were among the witnesses, along with Hiram Page, who was David's brother-in-law. The Whitmer family had provided Joseph and his wife Emma with free boarding in their home while Joseph dictated the Book of Mormon to Oliver Cowdery. As for Oliver, he was a distant cousin of Joseph and married David's sister Elizabeth Ann Whitmer about a year later. Thus ten of the eleven witnesses to the Book of Mormon plates were members of the Smith and Whitmer clans, Martin Harris being the only exception.

Two problematic aspects to the testimony of this second group of witnesses stand in sharp contrast to that of the first group and were arguably in direct contradiction to statements made in the Book of Mormon and Joseph's other early revelations concerning the witnesses.

The first problem is that those supposedly prophetic statements at first had clearly limited the number of witnesses to three. In Doctrine & Covenants 5, issued in March 1829, the Lord is quoted as saying regarding the Three, "I will give them power that they may behold and view these things as they are; *and to none else will* I grant this power" (D&C 5:13-14, emphasis added). Soon afterward, however, Joseph dictated a similar prophecy in the Book of Mormon but with an amendment that gave him the liberty to show the plates to others besides the Three. This prophecy stated "that the eyes of none shall behold it save it be that three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered" (2 Ne. 27:12). So far the prophecy appears to agree with D&C 5 in limiting the number of witnesses to three. However, it goes on to say that no one else was to be permitted to see the book "save it be a few according to the will of God," with verse 14 concluding that the number of additional witnesses was open-ended, "as many witnesses as seemeth him good." Evidently at this point Joseph felt it would be necessary to permit others beyond his chosen three witnesses to be given the privilege of being witnesses to the plates. The problem here is not merely an apparent verbal contradiction, but rather that the change appears to have been introduced *ad hoc* into the supposedly ancient text of the Book of Mormon in order to accommodate Joseph's changing needs.

The second problem is that the TEW gives the impression that the Eight were able to see the plates with apparently no spiritual preparation, no intense prayer vigil, and no angel acting as the custodian of the plates. After the heavy emphasis

with regard to the Three that they needed to be spiritually prepared, fervently praying, and in an attitude of strong faith, all of these concerns seem to be ignored with regard to the Eight. Furthermore, the experience of the Eight is reported as though it were a completely prosaic, physical, tactile examination of the plates. Their official testimony, the TEW, describes the plates as having "the appearance of gold" and separate "leaves" with "engravings," "all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship." The Eight testify "that the said Smith has shown" them the plates—note that Smith, not an angel, showed them the plates—and that they saw "and hefted" them. Can these be the same plates that just a few days earlier could only be seen by faith and the power of God? Why were the Eight permitted, apparently, to examine the plates so carefully, but the Three made no such examination?

In the end the TEW, even assuming it referred to a literal inspection by human eyes and hands of the gold plates, is of marginal significance. At most it might be thought to establish that Joseph at the time had in his possession something that looked like a bound stack of gold-colored metal plates. None of the witnesses described the engravings on the plates beyond affirming the presence of such engravings. Although the TEW states that the plates had "the appearance of ancient work," none of the witnesses could have had any way to know or verify that the plates were thousands of years old.

6.2.1.5 What Happened to the Gold Plates?

There would be little need for so much attention to such questions as whether Joseph Smith really saw an angel, whether that angel really led Joseph to some buried gold plates, if so who else saw the plates, and so forth if the gold plates were extant and available for examination and study. They are not. The question arises, then, as to what happened to the plates after Joseph finished with them. Joseph's only answer to this question is brief, vague, and ultimately incomplete: "When, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day" (JS-H 1:60). Since the messenger, supposedly the angel Moroni, presumably resides in heaven, does the statement that the messenger "has them in his charge" mean that the plates are now in heaven? On the other hand, Moroni would have been in heaven for some 1400

years prior to revealing the plates to Joseph, yet during that time it is understood that the plates remained buried in a stone box in the ground in a hillside near Joseph's home. So, when Joseph was done with them, were the plates buried in the ground again, and if so where and under what circumstances?

Two secondhand accounts likewise say only that Joseph returned the plates to Moroni. Peter Bauder, who spoke with Joseph in October 1830, reported in a statement published in 1834 that Joseph told him that after he was done translating part of the plates, he carried them into the woods according to the angel's instructions, and "the angel took them and carried them to parts unknown to him" (in *EMD*, 1:17). Martin Harris, in a letter written in 1871, said that the plates "were returned to the angel, Moroni, from whom they were received, to be brought forth again in the due time of the Lord" (in *EMD*, 2:339). Several other accounts indicate that Joseph reburied the plates (*EMD*, 1:24, 49-50, 204, 479).

A far more sensational story of what happened to the plates was not published until the 1850s, but the story appears to go back to as many as four of the eleven Book of Mormon witnesses: Oliver Cowdery, Joseph's brothers Hyrum and Samuel, and David Whitmer (see *EMD*, 3:379-82, 388, 407-408; 5:39, 121). The essence of the story is that the plates are hidden in a cave on or near the same hill where Joseph found them, awaiting the time when the angel will provide the sealed plates to another chosen seer to translate them. In most versions of the story, the cave was filled with various treasures including the breastplate, Laban's sword, and additional piles of gold plates. LDS writer Cameron Packer has collected ten accounts about the plates being kept in the cave (C. Packer 2004). The most famous version came from Joseph's successor Brigham Young, who claimed in 1877 that the cave housed "more plates than probably many wagon loads…piled up in the corners and along the walls" (*JD* 19:38). This story is commonly accepted as fact by Mormons to this day. Monte S. Nyman, for example, quoted Brigham Young's account as "evidence" of the "existence" of other inspired records waiting to be revealed and translated. "Some of the records that the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery saw in the cave were undoubtedly among those that are mentioned in the Book of Mormon" (Nyman 2001, 55).

The expectation of the LDS in the second half of the nineteenth century was that the untranslated plates would soon be revealed and that one of the Church's

presidents, each of whom since Joseph Smith has been described as its "seer," would translate more of the plates. As time passed and this expectation began to fade, Mormons often became defensive about the location of the plates (cf. R. Givens 2012). A century ago an article in the LDS periodical *Liahona* acknowledged that "the place where they have been hid up unto the Lord is described with precision" as in Brigham Young's account of the plates being buried in "the hill Cumorah." Yet the author dismissed the curiosity about the location of the plates on the part of those who were just learning the story of Mormonism: "It should be of no concern to us where the records now are as long as a copy of the Book of Mormon is in evidence. Man has no right to question the Lord's purposes; it is only a 'wicked and idolatrous nation' that will ask for a sign, and the holy scriptures give us the assurance that it is more blessed to believe without seeing" (Borgeson 1914, 570).

It turns out, then, that there is no solid historical information available as to what happened to the gold plates. If one assumes Joseph had something like metal plates in 1829, the most reasonable supposition is that he buried them somewhere. Yet the fact that as many as four of the eleven witnesses to the plates as well as other close associates of Joseph Smith claimed that the plates were placed in a veritable cave of wonders guarded by the angel is another indication of the magical and elusive nature of what should have been literally hard evidence.

6.2.1.6 Descriptions of the Gold Plates

Assuming for the sake of further analysis that Joseph Smith had some sort of metal plates, questions remain about the plausibility of his description of these plates and his claim that they contained the Book of Mormon in an ancient script. This section will document how Joseph and his associates described the plates and then examine carefully some of the implications of this description.

6.2.1.6.1 The Composition of the Plates

The canonical account of Joseph's acquiring the plates describes them as "gold plates"; in fact, the account attributes this description to the angel (JS-H 1:34). This part of Joseph's 1839 *History* is not only published in Joseph Smith—History, it is also published as part of the front matter in every printed edition of the Book of Mormon. Traditionally, Mormons have understood the angel's statement quoted by

Joseph as indicating that the plates were made of gold. However, for reasons that will become clear later in this section, Mormon scholars and apologists find it necessary to deny this conventional view.

So, for example, in an often-cited survey of nineteenth-century descriptions of the plates, Kurt Henrichsen tried to defend the view that the plates were not solid or pure gold. He selectively cited various individuals' descriptions of them as having "the appearance of gold," being "golden plates," and consisting of "a mixture of gold and copper" (Henrichsen 2001, 17), but completely omitted Joseph's canonical reference to them as "gold plates." He also failed to mention Joseph's descriptions of them as "plates of gold" in his 1832 *History* (*JSP-H1*, 14) and in his diary record of his 1835 conversation with Robert Matthews (*JSP-J1*, 88). The expression "plates of gold" clearly is parallel in form to the expression "plates of brass"; the expressions occur together in the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 28:11) and obviously indicate the metals of which the two sets of plates were composed. Earlier in the same part of the Book of Mormon, the plates of gold are described as "of pure gold" (Mosiah 8:9). While these are not the same plates as the ones Joseph supposedly had, their description makes it clear that Joseph's "plates of gold" were also understood to be made primarily if not entirely of gold. Furthermore, Joseph's comment that he was prevented at first from obtaining the plates because "Satan would try to tempt me (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father's family), to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich" (JS-H 1:46) clearly presupposes that the plates were composed of a precious metal. Granted that Joseph did not say the plates were "solid" or "pure" gold using those specific qualifiers, what he did say indicated that gold was at least the dominant material in the composition of the plates.

6.2.1.6.2 The Dimensions of the Plates

In his 1842 letter to John Wentworth, Joseph Smith described the plates as measuring "six inches wide and eight inches long and not quite so thick as common tin," and stated that "the volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed" (*EMD*, 1:171). Joseph's description closely matches one published two years earlier by Orson Pratt except that Pratt had the measurements of the plates as "not far from seven by eight inches in width and length" (O. Pratt 1840, 12, in *EMD*, 1:157). The dimensions of six inches wide by eight inches long

are the earliest figures known, first appearing in a September 1829 article in the *Rochester Gem* (*EMD*, 2:272-73). Putnam (1966, 788) accepted these figures, and they will also be followed here. Unfortunately it is impossible to know precisely how thick the plates were, but based on Joseph's description Mormon scholars have typically estimated that each plate might have been roughly .02 of an inch thick. If such plates were perfectly flat and stacked with no air between them, there would be fifty plates per inch of thickness, a figure leading Mormon scholars writing on the subject have accepted (Putnam 1966, 789; Sjodahl 2001, 23). These same scholars also accept the figure of six inches for the height of the whole stack of plates, although it should be noted that Joseph's wording, "something near six inches," probably means that the stack was just less than six inches in height.

Given the information reviewed so far, one may infer that the maximum number of plates in Joseph's possession was 300 (six inches multipled by 50 plates per inch). However, LDS scholars do not think there were actually that many plates. Putnam argued that due to "the unevenness left by the hammering and air spaces between the separate plates," a plate that was .02 of an inch thick "would occupy up to .05 of an inch in the stack, and there would be 20 plates to the inch," not fifty (Putnam 1966, 830). Here another factor comes into play: according to Joseph and his associates, part of the plates were "sealed" while part of them were not; that is, only some of the plates could be turned individually like pages in a book, while the others were bound together to prevent that part from being opened or examined. Joseph was not specific as to how many of the plates were sealed, stating only that of the six inches in volume "part of which was sealed" (Wentworth Letter, in *EMD*, 1:171). Both David Whitmer, one of the Three Witnesses (*Chicago Times,* Oct. 14, 1881; see *EMD*, 5:85), and Orson Pratt (April 13, 1856, in *JD* 3:347) stated that two-thirds of the plates were sealed, and most Mormons accept this figure (cf. Putnam 1966, 830). The two-thirds that were sealed would presumably have relatively little air between the plates while the unsealed plates might have considerable pockets of air between them. Hence Putnam concluded that the unsealed plates, each of which occupied roughly .05 of an inch despite being made of thinner metal sheets, and altogether took up only one-third of the six inches of the stack, numbered only about forty plates (Putnam 1966, 830).

6.2.1.6.3 The Weight of the Plates

Driving Putnam's calculations was the search for a solution to the problem of the weight of the plates. As he explained, a stack of plates measuring 6" by 8" by 6" would occupy 288 cubic inches, and if they filled that space completely and were composed of gold they would have weighed a little more than two hundred pounds (Putnam 1966, 829). This figure is far too high, for two reasons. First, all of the testimonial evidence is against the plates weighing even close to two hundred pounds. Martin Harris, for example, claimed, "I hefted the plates many times, and should think they weighed forty or fifty pounds" (Tiffany 1859, in *EMD*, 2:306). Second, it is difficult to see how Joseph could have carried the plates, even running through the woods with them while fending off attackers, if they were made of gold and matched the dimensions given. Appeals to miraculous power are *ad hoc*, since neither Joseph nor anyone else claimed this was how it was done (and Harris and others reported lifting the plates). In any case, a weight of even one hundred pounds is out of the question; Henrichsen gives several estimates from various nineteenth-century figures, none of which is over sixty pounds (Henrichsen 2001, 18).

Putnam introduced two considerations to alleviate the difficulty of the weight of gold plates matching Joseph's description. The first, already mentioned, is that the unsealed portion of the plates would occupy more space than their material dimensions would suggest because the plates would not be perfectly flat and would leave pockets of air between them. The second factor is that the plates were, he argued, made not mostly of gold but of an alloy called *tumbaga* that combined copper and gold. If the plates were an 8-carat gold alloy with a copper base, a block of such an alloy fitting Joseph's measurements would weigh about 107 pounds; a similar block made from a 12-carat alloy would have weighed about 174 pounds. According to Putnam, "Using such a block as a beginning point, 50 percent of the weight should be subtracted for air space," yielding the conclusion that the plates would have weighed between 53 and 86 pounds (830-31). Unfortunately, this calculation appears to make a mistake, since that reduction should only apply to the unsealed plates, as Putnam himself had stated. If the unsealed plates formed a solid block with no air between them, the weight of the plates would actually have been between 89 and 145 pounds. Allowing a ten percent reduction to allow for very small pockets of air due to irregularities in the sealed plates, the range based on Putnam's

working assumptions would be between about 80 and 130 pounds. This is still far too high based on the descriptions and accounts available (and even Putnam's range of 53 to 86 pounds is probably too high).

An earlier article that also sought to defend the plausibility of the Book of Mormon plates with regard to their weight was a 1923 article by Mormon scholar Janne Sjodahl. Despite the length of time that has passed since the article was published, it remains a standard reference on the subject in Mormon scholarship, and was reprinted in 2001 in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. Sjodahl based his calculation of the number of plates on Martin Harris's recollection that the stack of plates measured four inches high and Orson Pratt's statement that each plate measured 7 inches by 8 inches. Sjodahl noted that such a stack might contain 200 plates (at 50 plates per inch) but that the number must have been much less because the plates "were, in all probability, hammered and not cast," so that "there would be quite a space between each" (Sjodahl 2001, 23). This would mean that the unsealed plates would number no more than 67 but probably a good deal less than that, perhaps about 48 (23, 24). He also offered his own calculation for deriving the weight of the whole stack of plates, which was not as precise as Putnam's later calculation; Sjodahl estimated that the plates probably weighed between 50 and 75 pounds (24). Like Putnam, Sjodahl failed to differentiate the compactness of the sealed plates from the looseness of the unsealed plates; correcting for this error suggests a minimum weight of about 80 pounds.

6.2.1.7 Did Joseph Smith Make the Plates Using Tin?

The fact that Mormons have not been able to explain how the plates Joseph described could weigh sixty pounds or less, even assuming that they were made from an alloy that was only partly gold, suggests that if Joseph had any metal plates they must have been constructed from a much lighter metal. Joseph's own description of the plates as "not quite so thick as common tin" (*EMD*, 1:171) suggests an obvious answer: perhaps he had plates that *were* made of common tin. Far from being an *ad hoc* suggestion, the idea is eminently plausible because Joseph worked in his father's cooper's business that required extensive use of tinplate (for a picture of a reconstruction of the cooper's shop, see Satterfield n.d.). Joseph's use of the expression "common tin" to describe the thickness of the plates

reflects his firsthand knowledge of the craft, as that particular expression was the technical term for one of three kinds of tin used in metalworking shops (T. Webster 1845, 233). LDS scholar Donald Enders commented, "Father Joseph, Hyrum, and Joseph Jr. were coopers. Coopering was an exacting trade, particularly if the barrel was designed to hold liquid. Dye tubs, barrels, and water and sap buckets were products of the Smiths' cooper shop" (Enders 1993, 222).

Tinplate was typically a sheet of iron dipped in melted tin. An English textbook contemporaneous with the Smith family noted that "the tin-plate worker receives the tinned sheets in boxes, containing a certain number," which he uses in making such items as kettles, pans, milk pails, and lanterns. One of the main instruments used in all such work was "a large pair of shears, to cut the tin into a proper size and shape" (Phillips 1818, 400). Thus, Joseph would have had the materials and tools easily at hand, and the experience, to cut sheets of tinplate to form a "book" of metal plates.

What size sheets might Joseph had available in his family's cooper's shop? Dan Vogel stated that standard tinplate sheets were 14" by 10" (Vogel 2005, 600 n. 64), but that was the standard size in Britain. In the United States the standard size of tinplate sheets was 14" by 20", and various other sizes were available, including 12" x 24" sheets (Kent 1916, 192-193), which might have been cut into six equal sizes of exactly 6" by 8". A box of 112 such sheets weighed 103 pounds (Kent 1916, 193). Each sheet would have been about .0125 of an inch thick; allowing 0.02 inch per plate for some unevenness it may be estimated that it would take about 300 such plates to make the "book" of plates Joseph had (figuring 300 plates multiplied by .02 inch = 6 inches). That would take 50 sheets of tinplate, less than half a box, and they would weigh about 46 pounds (50/112 multiplied by 103 pounds). That figure falls comfortably in the range for the weight of the plates given by Martin Harris, who said they weighed between 40 and 50 pounds. Assuming far less unevenness in the plates, the calculation may be redone allowing only .015 inch per plate, requiring 396 plates made from 66 sheets to yield a stack just under six inches high (5.94") and weighing 60.7 pounds, right at the upper limit of the range of weights given by all of those who claimed to have lifted the plates. If the thickness of the plates was greater (or less) the total weight of the plates would be roughly the same, assuming the same ratio of metal to air in the stack.

It is of course not possible to prove that Joseph Smith constructed plates of tin and passed them off as ancient gold plates. However, this hypothesis explains the facts better than any other available explanation. It explains the reported weight of the plates, a problem that Mormon apologists have not been able to solve. Joseph had the means and opportunity to make the plates. Information about the dimensions of tinplate sheets available in Joseph's day is consistent with his own report as to the dimensions of the Book of Mormon plates. This hypothesis also explains why Joseph refused to let anyone examine the plates for nearly the entire time he supposedly had them, and why he never showed them to anyone who was doubtful or sceptical of his claims. If one interprets the Testimony of the Eight Witnesses to mean that the witnesses were allowed to examine the plates physically, Joseph might have needed to treat the plates in some way to make them look like gold. In any case, that Joseph made the plates from tinplate sheets appears to be a very reasonable explanation.

6.2.1.8 The "Breastplate" and the "Urim and Thummim"

The gold plates were not the only objects Joseph claimed to have recovered from a stone box in a hill near his home in Manchester in 1827. As mentioned briefly above, Joseph claimed the plates were accompanied by a breastplate. He also claimed to have found in the box an apparatus that looked like an overly large set of spectacles using stones instead of glass lenses. The stone spectacles attached to a breastplate that was to be worn while using the spectacles. According to the canonical account, the angel told him in 1823 "that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted 'seers' in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book" (JS-H 1:35).

The Testimonies of the Three and Eight Witnesses attest to seeing the gold plates, but they make no mention at all of the breastplate or the Urim and Thummim, and there are no officially recognized testimonies from individuals who claimed to have examined or even seen those items. Joseph himself gave no description of the breastplate, but what descriptions come (second-hand) from his family and associates consistently describe it as a metal breastplate shaped to fit over a man's

chest (*EMD*, 1:148, 339-40; 2:456; 3:466). The term "breastplate" in connection with the "Urim and Thummim" obviously likens it to the "breastplate" (KJV; Heb., *hōshen*; Greek, *epōmis*) of the high priest described in the Book of Exodus in which the "Urim and Thummim" were placed (Exod. 25:7; 28:4, 15, 22-30; 29:5; 35:9, 27; 39:8-9, 15-21; Lev. 8:8). In 1842 Lucy Smith referred to the breastplate as "the golden breastplate of the high priesthood" and as "the sacred breastplate," suggesting the same connection (*EMD*, 1:221). The association of the breastplate and the Urim and Thummim in the OT is acknowledged by LDS scholars (e.g., T. Givens 2002, 22; R. Nicholson 2013, 149).

It turns out that the translation "breastplate" in the KJV is not the best rendering of the Hebrew word *hōshen*, which did not denote a piece of body armor; it did not refer to a metallic vest, coat of mail, or armor plating such as might be worn in battle. Hebrew does have such a word, *shiryan*, used literally for body armor covering a man's chest (1 Sam. 17:5 [2x], 38; 1 Kings 22:34; 2 Chron. 18:33; 26:14; Neh. 4:16 [MT 4:10]) and used in Isaiah 59:17 as a metaphorical description of the preparation of the Messianic Servant. It is translated in the LXX (except in 1 Sam. 17:38) as *thōrax*, a term also used metaphorically in the NT by Paul of believers in Jesus as that Messiah (Eph. 6:14; 1 Thess. 5:8).

The garment made for the high priest was *not* a breastplate, but a piece of cloth studded with jewels and worn over the chest or breast. Exodus describes it as being square in shape, one span (about 9 inches) across and high and "doubled" (i.e., probably folded over). It was composed primarily of yarns and twined linen (28:15), with a dozen different (obviously small) precious stones set in four rows of three into the cloth with gold filigree to represent the twelve tribes (28:17-21), with gold rings at the corners through which twisted chains of gold were threaded to attach the breastpiece to the ephod (28:22-28). According to the Hebrew text, the Urim and Thummim were placed inside the breastpiece, which thus functioned effectively as a pouch (28:30). Hence, standard Hebrew-English lexicons render *hōshen* as "breast-piece," "breast-pouch," or "sacred pouch" (Holladay 1997, #2952; BDB #3561; *TWOT* #772a), and modern English versions commonly render *hōshen* in these texts not as "breastplate" (the NKJV is a notable exception) but as "breastpiece" (e.g., ESV, NASB, NET, NIV, NRSV). An alternative view regards the breastpiece as a double-layered piece of cloth and not as a pouch; according to this

view the dozen jewels on the breastpiece *were* the Urim and Thummim. Although the pouch view is probably correct and now the dominant scholarly interpretation (Van Dam 1997, 153-60), either interpretation is clearly incompatible with the "breastplate" that Joseph Smith claimed to have found with the "Urim and Thummim" and the gold plates.

Stones for use in translating are mentioned in the Book of Mormon, but they are called "interpreters," not Urim and Thummim. Consistent with this fact, the Book of Mormon refers several times to breastplates as part of the armor of men in battle (Mosiah 8:10; Alma 43:19, 21, 38, 44; 46:13; 49:6, 24; Hel. 1:14; Ether 15:15) but makes no mention of a breastplate in connection with the interpreters. The first recorded reference to a breastplate in connection with the gold plates comes from a hostile source in June 1830—a couple of months after the Book of Mormon had been published and a year after Joseph had finished dictating it (Cole 1830, 36-37). It shows that Joseph was claiming to have had such a breastplate before that date but how long before is unknown.

As mentioned earlier, the Book of Mormon never uses the terms Urim and Thummim. It does, however, describe the apparatus that Joseph Smith at some point identified as the Urim and Thummim. Called "the interpreters," the apparatus is described as consisting of "two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow" that had been "prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages…. And whosoever has these things is called seer, after the manner of old times" (Mosiah 8:13, 19; 28:13-16). These stones were touched by the Lord with his finger and given to the brother of Jared, to be "sealed up" along with the written records their people would produce, to be used at a later time as "interpreters" for making known the meaning of those records (Ether 3:1-6, 22-28; 4:4-5). Note that these "interpreters" were not the Urim and Thummim discussed in the OT. "Modern revelation teaches that the Urim and Thummim Joseph Smith used was the same one given to the brother of Jared by the Lord (see D&C 17:1; Ether 3:6-16, 23). It differed from that had by Moses or Abraham" (Whitchurch 2000, 1276-77; so also Hoskisson 1992, 1499). Nevertheless, neither Joseph Smith nor any of his associates ever suggested that his Urim and Thummim were different in nature or function than those featured in the OT.

The expression "the Urim and the Thummim" is an Anglicized transliteration of the Hebrew *'et-hā'ûrîm wᵊ'et-hattummîm*. This precise expression is found only twice in the OT ("the Urim and the Thummim," Exod. 28:30; Lev. 8:8). The terms are found together in other expressions three times ("your Thummim and your Urim," Deut. 33:8; "with Urim and with Thummim," Ezra 2:63; "with Urim and Thummim," Neh. 7:65), and the term "Urim" by itself twice ("the Urim," Num. 27:21; "by Urim," 1 Sam. 28:6). "Thummim" never appears without "Urim." There are, then, five different expressions in seven occurrences in the Hebrew OT of the word Urim, none of which appears more than twice.

The LDS use of the term "Urim and Thummim" to denote the stone spectacles has the advantage of a lack of any clear description or explanation of the Urim and Thummim in the Bible. These Hebrew words may be translated into English literally as "Lights and Perfections," but this information leaves the matter of the object's or objects' nature and purpose unclear, so that most scholars prefer merely to transliterate the Hebrew terms rather than to use English equivalents as a translation (Craigen 1978, 1). It is not even clear whether the Urim and Thummim is a name for a single object, two objects, or more than two—perhaps even many—objects (Van Dam 1997, 160-61). The plural forms of the two Hebrew words may be construed as intensive plurals, in which case they need not be designating two groups of objects or items. Furthermore, it is grammatically possible to interpret the expression as a hendiadys (i.e., with the meaning "the perfect light"), in which case the two nouns might even refer to a single object (Van Dam 1997, 136-39). Caution is in order, however, because other interpretations remain possible.

The Urim and Thummim are consistently associated in the OT with the priests of the tribe of Levi, who alone were authorized to use them (Exod. 28:20; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:41; Deut. 33:8; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65; see also 1 Esdras 5:40). The Urim and Thummim were kept in the breastpiece, which was attached to the ephod worn by the high priest, according to the specifications laid down in Exodus 28. Joseph Smith was not, of course, a priest in any sense when he supposedly translated the gold plates using the Urim and Thummim.

In general, the Urim and Thummim were used to make specific inquiries of the Lord, and the answers were usually quite brief (2 Sam. 5:23-24 is the longest answer recorded in the Bible in which the Urim and Thummim may have played a

role). Moreover, the purpose for which the Urim and Thummim might be used appears to have been rather circumscribed. Numbers 27:41 suggests that the Urim and Thummim were entrusted to the high priest for use in inquiring of the Lord in matters of state in Israel. A review of the historical texts in which use of the Urim and Thummim is stated or implied confirms this understanding. In all instances, inquiries of the Lord that may have involved using the Urim and Thummim and that are mentioned in the historical books were requesting counsel regarding military or political matters concerning Israel (Josh. 9:14; Judg. 1:1-2; 20:18-28; 1 Sam. 10:17-22; 23:1-12; 2 Sam. 1:1; 5:19, 23-24/1 Chron. 14:10, 14-15). Thus, in the length of the revelation supposedly mediated through the Urim and Thummim and in the nature of the activity, Joseph's claimed use of the Urim and Thummim to translate hundreds of pages of scriptural text is utterly foreign to the Bible.

Cornelis Van Dam made the significant point that the high priest used the Urim and Thummim "openly, not in secret" (Van Dam 1997, 223). He adduced evidence from several passages, notably the priest's invitation to Saul, "Let *us* draw near to God," in reference to inquiring of the Lord (1 Sam. 14:37). By contrast, none of Joseph Smith's family or other associates reported ever seeing Joseph use the stone spectacles, or even see the spectacles uncovered.

Certainty as to how the Urim and Thummim functioned is beyond reach due to the lack of any description of the object or objects. The dominant view in twentieth-century scholarship was that they functioned as a lot oracle in which the possible outcomes were Yes, No, and no answer given. If that view is correct, of course, then Joseph Smith's "Urim and Thummim" clearly cannot be like the Urim and Thummim of the Bible. However, Van Dam opposed the lot oracle view, arguing instead that the Urim and Thummim authenticated or corroborated a prophetic answer given by a high priest in response to a royal figure's inquiry, perhaps by glowing with a special light (Van Dam 1997, 224). Van Dam's study has convinced some but not most scholars. The "lot oracle" view still enjoys considerable support (for a critique of Van Dam on this issue, see Hurowitz 1998, 264-68). If Van Dam is right, however, his finding gives no grounds for rehabilitating the plausibility of Joseph Smith's claim to have used the Urim and Thummim to translate the Book of Mormon. A use of the Urim and Thummim (a) in secret, (b) by someone who was

not a priest, (c) to translate an ancient text is simply out of the question on any credible theory as to the nature of the biblical Urim and Thummim.

In review, there are serious reasons for doubting Joseph Smith's claim to have found a breastplate and stone spectacles called the Urim and Thummim with the gold plates he said the angel showed him in a stone box near his home. The mismatch between Joseph's alleged paraphernalia and the biblical items bearing their names, taken together with the fact that due to Joseph's secretiveness none of Joseph's family or associates ever claimed to have seen these items uncovered (much less in use), constitute strong grounds for disbelieving his claim to have found such objects.

6.2.1.9 Joseph Smith's Use of a Seer Stone to Translate

Ironically, despite Joseph Smith's claim to have translated the Book of Mormon using the Urim and Thummim found in the stone box with the gold plates, there is now a broad consensus among both LDS and non-LDS researchers that he actually used his seer stone when dictating the translation. To be more precise, LDS scholars generally claim that Joseph used the Urim and Thummim (Nephite "interpreters") to generate the 116 pages of translation that were subsequently lost or stolen (see below, §6.2.3), but that he used his seer stone to translate the text that was published as the Book of Mormon. This was the claim made by his widow Emma Smith Bidamon in a letter dated 1870: "Now the first that my <husband> translated, [the book] was translated by the use of Urim, and Thummim, and that was the part that Martin Harris lost, after that he used a small stone, not exactly, black, but was rather a dark color" (as quoted in *EMD*, 1:532). Others close to Joseph and his family made similar statements (see *EMD*, 5:138, 327).

However, Joseph himself explicitly claimed that the stone spectacles had been returned to him and that he used them to translate the Book of Mormon. As quoted earlier, Joseph stated in his 1839 *History*, in what is LDS scripture, that the angel Moroni told him "that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted 'seers' in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book" (JS-H 1:35). At the end of Joseph Smith—

History is an extended note quoting Oliver Cowdery as affirming that Joseph "translated with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, 'Interpreters,' the history or record called 'The Book of Mormon.'" Joseph made the same point explicitly in several other publications, notably the 1842 Wentworth Letter (EMD, 1:171). These statements simply cannot be understood to be intended to refer to one or more of Joseph's seer stones.

Not surprisingly, some Mormons, including some of its past leaders, have actually denied that Joseph used his seer stone to translate the Book of Mormon, citing Joseph's explicit testimony in the matter. Joseph Fielding Smith (1956, 3:226), for example, dismissed all of the accounts of Joseph using his seer stone: "The information is all *hearsay*, and personally, I do not believe that this stone was used for this purpose." Smith admitted that the accounts might be true but suggested that the witnesses were confused due to the fact that Joseph did have a seer stone but used it for other purposes. The confusion was Joseph's doing, however, because he evidently used one of his seer stones (which several individuals saw) yet claimed in his official *History* that he used the stone spectacles (which no one else apparently saw) he said were in the box with the gold plates.

When associates described Joseph translating the gold plates, they usually said that he did so by placing a stone (or stones) in his hat and looking into the hat. This was true both for the 116 pages and for the later manuscript known as the Book of Mormon. Emma, who served as a scribe for part of the 116 pages, stated, "I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it and dictating hour after hour" (*EMD*, 1:539). In an 1881 article Edward Stevenson reported that Harris "said that the Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seer stone" (*EMD*, 2:320). In context Harris was referring to Joseph's translation when Harris served as his scribe for the 116 pages (2:320-21). William Smith and David Whitmer in later years also made similar statements in reference to the translation of the Book of Mormon, although they used the term Urim and Thummim to refer to "the stone" (*EMD*, 1:497, 506, 508; 5:21; similarly Joseph Knight Sr., *EMD*, 4:17).

That Joseph dictated the Book of Mormon, primarily to Oliver Cowdery as his scribe, using the seer stone in the hat is so widely attested by eyewitnesses that the

consensus of contemporary Mormon scholars accepts this as fact. David Whitmer repeatedly affirmed that Joseph used a seer stone to produce the translation of the Book of Mormon. An 1886 newspaper article reported that according to Whitmer Joseph used "a strange oval-shaped, chocolate-colored stone about the size of an egg, only more flat," and that "with this stone all of the present Book of Mormon was translated" (*EMD*, 5:179). In his polemical book *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Whitmer wrote that "the Book of Mormon was translated" by Joseph putting "the seer stone into a hat" and dictating to Oliver Cowdery the translation (Whitmer 1887, 12). Others who described Joseph dictating the Book of Mormon using a seer stone included his father-in-law Isaac Hale ("with the stone in his hat, and his hat over his face," *EMD*, 4:287) and brother-in-law Michael Morse ("placing the Seer Stone in the crown of a hat, then putting his face into the hat," *EMD*, 4:343).

As has been already mentioned, it is now the consensus of Mormon scholars that Joseph used a seer stone to translate the Book of Mormon. Richard Turley's entry on "Seer stones" in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* acknowledged that Joseph used seer stones "in translating the Book of Mormon and receiving revelations" (*EM*, 3:1293). Bushman, who accepts the historicity of the stone spectacles, stated that Joseph dictated the Book of Mormon to Oliver Cowdery while his "head was in a hat looking at the seerstone, which by this time had replaced the interpreters" (Bushman 2005, 72). Similarly, Brant Gardner referred to "the seer stone with which Joseph translated the bulk of the Book of Mormon after the loss of the 116 manuscript pages" (Gardner 2011, 128).

What is the significance of the fact that Joseph dictated his translation of the Book of Mormon using a seer stone in his hat rather than a pair of stone spectacles? After all, one might argue, in either case Joseph was dictating the Book of Mormon using one or two stones as an instrument (Ash 2013, 286). First of all, Joseph Smith did not tell the truth when he claimed that he used the stone spectacles attached to a breastplate found in the same stone box with the gold plates. Joseph gave false testimony when he made that claim. Now, if Joseph's testimony of how he translated the Book of Mormon has been shown to be materially false in one important respect, on what grounds can anyone regard his testimony as in other respects trustworthy or believable? If he lied about the means used in the translation, his claim to have

translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God must be regarded as dubious.

A second, related point is that Joseph's use of the seer stone in the hat confirms and strengthens the finding discussed earlier (§6.2.1.2) that the Book of Mormon originated in the context of Joseph's disreputable "money-digging" enterprises (conducted in the same way, with the seer stone in a hat) and the magical folklore with which they were associated. It was shown in that earlier discussion that Joseph falsified his official history by claiming that his involvement in treasure hunting was limited to a month-long expedition in which he was just one of several employees who dug for Josiah Stowell. In fact Joseph engaged in treasure hunting operations with his family and others over a five-year period, and his role was not to do the digging but to locate the treasures using a seer stone in his hat. Now it is known that this was the context not only of Joseph's claim to have found the gold plates but also of Joseph's claim to translate them by divine power. It thus becomes clear that the motivation for Joseph's falsifying his history with regard to the instrument used to translate the plates was the same as the motivation for his falsifying his history with regard to his involvement in money-digging. Joseph wished to persuade people that the Book of Mormon was a religious document like the Bible, written by prophets under divine inspiration, and (unlike the Bible) translated by a prophet under divine inspiration. He recognized that this claim would not be credible if the Book of Mormon was viewed as originating in his years-long career of using a "peepstone" to lead people to buried treasure.

Third, the misdirection that characterized Joseph Smith's accounts of the finding and translating of the Book of Mormon is reflected in the shock felt by many Mormons when they first learn about the stone in the hat. Roger Nicholson frankly acknowledged that Mormons have commonly been taught that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon using the stone spectacles to read the gold plates: "The story with which we are quite familiar from Sunday School and Seminary describes Joseph using the Urim and Thummim (the Nephite interpreters) to look at the gold plates while screened from his scribe by a curtain" (R. Nicholson 2013, 122). Mormon apologist Michael Ash understated the matter when he admitted that "many members are not very knowledgeable about Smith's methods of translating"

(Ash 2013, 286). The reality is that *most* members were *misinformed* about Joseph's translation method, as Nicholson's more candid remark illustrates.

If anyone is to blame for the confusion over the means by which Joseph Smith purported to translate the Book of Mormon, it would have to be Joseph himself. When his brother Hyrum in 1831 directly asked him at a general conference of the LDS Church to explain how he translated the Book of Mormon—a question Hyrum asked in full faith that the translation was inspired—Joseph "said that it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and also said that it was not expedient for him to relate these things" (*HC* 1:220 n.). The most he would ever say was that he did so using the Urim and Thummim that he had found with the gold plates, and that he did so "by the gift and power of God." His refusal to speak forthrightly about how the Book of Mormon was translated is the reason why most Mormons to this day remain misinformed about the facts. Mormon apostle Neal A. Maxwell admitted, "The Prophet Joseph alone knew the full process, and he was deliberately reluctant to describe details." Maxwell, however, dismissed the question as unimportant: "Our primary focus in studying the Book of Mormon should be on the principles of the gospel anyway, not on the process by which the book came forth" (Maxwell 1997, 39).

In July 2013, an explosive *New York Times* article told the story of Hans Mattsson, a formerly high-ranking Mormon leader in Sweden who became the spokesman for a large group of Mormons seeking better answers to difficult questions about the origins of their religion. One of those issues, mentioned in the article, was the LDS Church's routine misrepresentation of Joseph translating directly from the gold plates, suppressing the facts concerning Joseph's use of the seer stone in his hat (Goodstein 2013, 2). In December 2013, the LDS Church published an official statement discussing in detail issues concerning Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon and explicitly acknowledging for the first time that he had used one of his treasure-hunting seer stones in the translation work. "As a young man during the 1820s, Joseph Smith, like others in his day, used a seer stone to look for lost objects and buried treasure. As Joseph grew to understand his prophetic calling, he learned that he could use this stone for the higher purpose of translating scripture. Apparently for convenience, Joseph often

translated with the single seer stone rather than the two stones bound together to form the interpreters" (Intellectual Reserve 2013a).

Following the lead of LDS scholars, the article claimed that because the seer stone and the Nephite interpreters were interchangeable in function, "in the course of time, Joseph Smith and his associates often used the term 'Urim and Thummim' to refer to the single stone as well as the interpreters" (Intellectual Reserve 2013a). As was explained above, however, this claim glosses over Joseph's very specific, repeated assertion that the Urim and Thummim that he found in the stone box with the gold plates was the translation instrument he used.

Fourth, the fact that Joseph Smith did not use the stone spectacles to translate the Book of Mormon stands in conflict with the teaching of the Book of Mormon itself. Joseph's statement that "the possession and use of these stones [of the spectacles called the Urim and Thummim] were what constituted 'seers' in ancient or former times" (JS-H 1:35) clearly implies that if Joseph did not use those stones (but instead a seer stone he found years earlier) then he was not genuinely functioning as a "seer" in his translation. This implication is supported by the Book of Mormon. One passage quotes a figure named Ammon as saying that he knows of a man who can translate records written in an unknown language, "for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God." These "things are called interpreters," and whomever God commands "to look in them, the same is called seer" (Mosiah 8:13). The king agrees that "these interpreters were doubtless prepared for the purpose of unfolding all such mysteries to the children of men" (8:19). The interpreters were "two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow" and that were "prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages" (Mosiah 28:13-14).

These "interpreters" are the same instrument that Joseph claimed he used to translate the Book of Mormon. Yet it is now widely accepted even by LDS scholars that Joseph did not use those stone spectacles, supposedly passed down from one generation to the next for millennia and then buried with the gold plates in the hill near Joseph's home. If the possession and use of these specific stones as spectacles were what enabled certain men to function as "seers," it follows that anyone falsely claiming to have used those stone spectacles would not be a genuine

seer. Thus the problem goes beyond the fact that Joseph falsified his testimony about how he translated the plates, as bad as that is. According to his own claim and the very text he claimed to have translated supernaturally, the fact that he did not use the ancient stone spectacles and yet claimed to have used them disqualifies him as a genuine seer.

This last point utterly negates Brant Gardner's argument that what made Joseph Smith a seer was the supernatural gift within him, not the stones. Gardner admitted that Joseph himself, as well as his associates such as Martin Harris, thought the stones were essential to the process. According to Gardner, their belief that certain stones were vehicles of special powers of seeing while other stones were not was "a pseudo-scientific way of explaining what Joseph and others experienced as a reality" (Gardner 2011, 289). The fact that Joseph was able to translate using his own seer stone just as well as with the stone spectacles, and to produce his later revelations with no stone or instrument at all, indicated for Gardner that "it really was Joseph doing the translation…. It was never the interpreters, never the stones. It was always Joseph" (291, 293). In a sense, Gardner appears to be quite correct: it *was* always Joseph. For Gardner, Joseph's translations and other scriptural texts can nevertheless be considered divine revelation. However, to affirm that these texts were divinely revealed while rejecting the explanations given in the texts themselves as to how they were revealed simply makes no sense. In that respect Gardner's view is highly implausible because it attributes inspiration to Joseph yet contradicts both the Book of Mormon and the statement Joseph attributed to the angel Moroni. What is most plausibly indicated by Joseph's apparent ability to produce revelations with or without a stone is that they were not divine revelations at all.

6.2.1.10   Irrelevance of the Gold Plates to the Translation

One other implication of the fact that Joseph Smith dictated the translation of the Book of Mormon with his seer stone deserves special attention. The method Joseph used means that he did not actually use the gold plates when producing his translation. As David Whitmer described the method, "Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light" (Whitmer 1887, 12). This means, of course, that he was not

looking at the plates when he was dictating his translation of them, as Whitmer and others acknowledged (Whitmer 1875; *EMD*, 1:542; 4:287).

Here again, the LDS Church for many years has fostered the belief that Joseph Smith actively studied the plates as part of his work of translating them. A particularly clear example is a statement in the 1997 curriculum manual *Primary 5: Doctrine and Covenants and Church History*, a manual for upper elementary students: "At first Joseph spent a lot of time becoming familiar with the plates and the language in which they were written. As he studied and prayed, the Urim and Thummim helped him understand the characters on the plates" (Intellectual Reserve 1997, 26-30). This claim was articulated decades earlier by Joseph Fielding Smith (1956, 3:215-16): "He was busy studying the characters and making himself familiar with them and the use of the Urim and Thummim. He had a great deal more to do than merely to sit down and with the use of the instrument prepared for that purpose translate the characters on the plates." This understanding is reinforced in the numerous pictures in LDS publications depicting Joseph closely examining the plates, often with his finger touching a plate as if he were examining a specific word or character (for a recent example, see Intellectual Reserve 2013b).

If Joseph did not look at the plates while he was translating them, but obtained his translation by looking at his seer stone inside his hat, then the plates were really irrelevant to the production of the translation. Whether the plates existed or not, whether they were ancient gold plates or modern tin plates, Joseph did not use them, examine them, or read them in any fashion. There simply was no need for Joseph to have the plates in his possession at any time. If Joseph produced the English text of the Book of Mormon by looking at his seer stone in the bottom of his hat, he could have done so without ever having seen or even heard of the gold plates. There was no need or purpose for Moroni to disclose the location of the plates to Joseph. There was no point in Joseph taking precautions to prevent anyone from stealing the plates. All that might have been needed was for the angel to inform Joseph that the Lord wanted to reveal an English version of an ancient text to him through his seer stone. The gold plates were irrelevant.

Orson Pratt made an interesting assertion contrasting the Book of Mormon favourably with other modern religious books purporting to be inspired: "Now, if Mr. Smith had professed that he had got his book as Swedenborg obtained his or as the

Shakers obtained theirs; that is, if he had professed to have obtained this book to usher in this last dispensation in any other way but *'out of the ground,'* we should have had reason to suppose him a deceiver, like Swedenborg and thousands of others" (O. Pratt 1848, 273-74, emphasis in original). The evidence considered so far raises serious doubts about whether Joseph obtained his book "out of the ground," and in any case what he may or may not have taken from the ground played no role in the production of the book known as the Book of Mormon. Pratt was correct in saying that Joseph "professed" to have obtained his book "out of the ground," and in this respect it differed from some other modern religious texts. Only if the claim merits some measure of confidence, though, is the contrast meaningful.

6.2.2 The Anthon Transcript

Since the gold plates, if they ever existed, are no longer extant, no Book of Mormon written in an ancient language is available to be read or even examined. However, there is a piece of paper that many Mormons believe contains characters copied from the gold plates. If this were so, it would potentially be of extreme interest and value in considering the claim made by Joseph Smith to have translated the Book of Mormon from ancient gold plates.

The piece of paper in question is known as the Anthon transcript, named for the classics scholar Charles Anthon to whom Martin Harris showed the paper in early 1828. Everyone agrees that Harris went to see Anthon in 1828 with a piece of paper containing a number of characters. It is also generally agreed that Harris also showed the paper to someone called in LDS sources "Mitchell," whom scholars have identified as Samuel L. Mitchill, a physician and professor with education and interest in classical studies (Kimball 1970, 332-34). Beyond that fact there is little agreement in the primary sources or in later commentary and analysis as to what exactly happened, let alone what it means. The official, canonical account of the event in Joseph Smith—History will once again be the point of departure in this study for investigating the facts about the Anthon affair.

According to Joseph's account, immediately after his arrival at his father-in-law's house in Harmony, Pennsylvania, he "copied a considerable number of" the characters on the plates "and by means of the Urim and Thummim [he] translated some of them" between December 1827 and February 1828 (JS-H 1:62). In

February he gave Harris a piece of paper with the characters he had "drawn off the plates" and sent him to New York City to show the paper to some scholars (1:63). Joseph then quotes Harris for the rest of his account of the incident. Harris "presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon," who "stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian." Harris also showed Anthon something with characters that Joseph had not yet translated, and Anthon told Harris that "they were true characters," specifically "Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic." Anthon gave Harris a "certificate" authenticating the characters and the translation that Joseph had produced, but as Harris was leaving Anthon learned that Joseph had translated the characters from gold plates revealed to him by an angel (1:64). Anthon then demanded the certificate back and tore it up, denying that angels visited people any longer. Harris next visited Mitchill, who gave the same positive assessment of the characters and the translation (1:65).

Joseph Smith's version of the Anthon incident is literally *impossible*, for one very simple reason: neither Anthon nor Mitchill could possibly have evaluated any translation of the supposed characters from the gold plates. There are two facts that prove this point beyond reasonable doubt.

First, according to the Book of Mormon itself, the Egyptian characters in which it was written were "reformed" or "altered" by the Nephites to such an extent that no other people knew their language and no one could by natural knowledge read or understand it (Mormon 9:32-34). LDS scholar Stanley Kimball makes the wry observation that "even a reincarnated Egyptian could not have translated the characters" (Kimball 1970, 335). Therefore, if one simply accepts the Book of Mormon statement as indicative of the nature of the characters that Anthon and Mitchill would have been shown, they could not possibly have deciphered them sufficiently to translate them.

Second, the study of ancient Egyptian texts was in its infancy in 1828; even the most erudite scholar at the time could not have validated a translation of any Egyptian hieroglyphic text, let alone a translation of an otherwise unknown, altered form of Egyptian. Anthon was an accomplished scholar and well-versed in classical languages such as Greek and Latin, but he could not read ancient Egyptian. Nor did anyone else in the Western Hemisphere have any inkling of how to translate ancient

Egyptian texts. The statement that Anthon declared "that the translation was correct, *more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian*," assumes there was a body of scholarship available to Anthon with a good number of ancient Egyptian texts and translations of varying quality that he was able to compare with Joseph's supposed translation of the characters. No such body of scholarship existed anywhere on earth in 1828.

The claim made in Joseph Smith—History that Anthon validated a translation of the characters is also contradicted by the testimonies of earlier sources. One of these, surprisingly, was Joseph himself. In his 1832 *History*, Joseph stated that Harris went to the learned and asked him to read the copied characters, which he was unable to do. Harris then returned to Joseph, at which time Joseph admitted that he was unlearned and also could not do it, but that with the spectacles the Lord had prepared for him he could read the book. Joseph says that he then "commenced translating the characters" (*EMD*, 1:30). David Sloan, in an article in the conservative LDS periodical *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, acknowledged that "according to the 1832 history, Joseph could not translate the very same characters that he had previously copied off the plates; furthermore, it was not until the characters were returned to him that he 'commenced' translating them" (Sloan 1996, 62-63; see also Draper, Brown, and Rhodes 2005, 369).

Anthon himself twice stated in writing that he had not authenticated the characters. In letters written in 1834 and 1841, Anthon dismissed the characters as meaningless. The paper, he said in the first letter (written to E. D. Howe), "consisted of all kinds of crooked characters disposed in columns, and had evidently been prepared by some person who had before him at the time a book containing various alphabets." The paper included "Greek and Hebrew letters, crosses and flourishes, Roman letters inverted or placed sideways," and "contained anything else but '*Egyptian Hieroglyphics*'" (*EMD*, 4:380). In his 1841 letter (to Thomas Coit), Anthon recalled that the characters consisted of "Greek, Hebrew, and all sorts of letters, more or less distorted, either through unskilfulness or from actual design," that "were intermingled with sundry delineations of half moons, stars, and other natural objects." He concluded that "the marks in the paper appeared to be merely an imitation of various alphabetic characters, and had in my opinion no meaning at all connected with them" (*EMD*, 4:383-85).

LDS writers often seek to discredit Anthon's testimony by pointing to "glaring inconsistencies" in his two accounts (Kimball 1970, 339), even though they do not view inconsistencies in Joseph Smith's accounts as similarly damaging. In any case, the alleged inconsistencies did not pertain to the core issue of what Anthon had told Harris about the characters. As a matter of fact, there is independent evidence supporting Anthon's description of the characters. Joseph Smith's official account claims that Anthon identified the characters as "Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic" (JS-H 1:64), agreeing with Anthon's letters in saying that he thought the paper included characters from several languages (although Joseph's list of languages differs from Anthon's). It is reasonably certain, then, that Anthon told Harris that the characters were a mix of different types of characters from various languages. Anthon could not have expressed that assessment and yet authenticated the characters as representing a meaningful written text.

Additionally, as has already been pointed out, the Book of Mormon states that the characters were all an altered form of Egyptian characters, not a mix of authentic characters from several different types of languages. If the Book of Mormon was written in an unrecognizable script, Anthon could not have pronounced the characters authentic. The most he could have done was to compare individual characters to similar-looking characters in various ancient languages, as both he and Joseph Smith attested he did.

What, then, about the paper extant today that is commonly known as the Anthon transcript? According to LDS scholar John Gee, "The transcript was in the possession of Oliver Cowdery, who gave it to David Whitmer; it then passed to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now called the Community of Christ] with the rest of David Whitmer's manuscripts" (Gee 1998b, 171). The paper has the word "Caractors" (said to be Joseph's usual misspelling) written across the top, with seven lines of characters underneath—and no translation.

Although the paper may be the Anthon transcript or, more likely, a careful handmade copy of it, it does not fully correspond to anyone's description of the transcript. For example, although it does contain characters resembling those of a variety of language scripts including Greek, Hebrew, and Roman, as Anthon had stated, as well as various crosses, it does not have moons or stars. Perhaps most significantly, the characters are not placed in vertical columns, as Anthon had

remembered. Nor are its characters a mix of "Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic" characters (JS-H 1:64). The authenticity of the paper remains uncertain. If the Anthon transcript is genuine, though, since it remains undecipherable to this day, it constitutes further evidence for the conclusion that Anthon could have neither authenticated the characters nor validated a translation of them.

The core claims of Joseph Smith's official, scriptural account of the Anthon visit do not withstand reasonable scrutiny. Anthon could not have validated Joseph's translation of the characters on the transcript (even if he had provided one, which evidently he did not). The evidence also shows that Anthon did not authenticate the characters, though he may well have told Harris that some of the markings resembled characters from different ancient languages. In any case, Anthon did not and could not authenticate the characters as part of a coherent or meaningful language, and certainly did not validate Joseph's translating abilities.

6.2.3 The Lost 116 Pages

One of the formative events leading to the publication of the Book of Mormon, to which reference has already been made a few times, was the loss of the first 116 pages of manuscript that Joseph Smith dictated as his translation of the gold plates. The basic historical facts concerning this event, unlike most of the events considered so far, are not in question. Joseph had dictated the text of the manuscript to scribes during the first half of 1828, while living with his pregnant wife Emma at her parents' home in Harmony, Pennsylvania. The main scribe was Martin Harris, who took dictation from Joseph soon after returning from his encounter with Charles Anthon in New York City. Between mid-April and mid-June, Joseph and Martin produced a total of 116 pages of manuscript (*HC*, 1:20-21).

Martin's wife Lucy was adamantly opposed to the project. She asked to see the gold plates and Joseph refused, as he refused everyone else during that period. She then demanded that she at least be allowed to see the pages of the manuscript. Martin begged Joseph to ask the Lord for permission to take the pages home, and Joseph informed Martin that he had inquired of the Lord but that the answer was no. After repeated cajoling, Joseph told Martin that following a third inquiry of the Lord, "permission was granted" for Martin to take the manuscript home to Palmyra on the condition that he show it only to his wife and four other relatives (*HC*, 1:21).

With Martin gone, Joseph took some time off for the imminent birth of their first child. Harris left apparently on June 14 and Joseph and Emma's child was born on June 15 but died the same day following a difficult delivery that left Emma in critical condition for about two weeks. During that time, Joseph remained with Emma in Harmony (Bushman 2005, 66-67).

At first Martin complied with the instructions Joseph said the Lord had given. The manuscript was kept locked in Lucy's dresser drawer, but then Martin picked the lock to show the manuscript to some friends, damaging the dresser in the process. He began showing the manuscript to all sorts of people and kept it in an unlocked drawer in his own dresser. Within a few days, the manuscript disappeared from the unlocked drawer. As Emma's condition improved, Joseph began to be concerned when Martin did not return in a timely fashion from his trip to Palmyra. Joseph decided to go to his own parents' home in Manchester in order to reconnect with Martin. On July 1 or shortly thereafter, Joseph reached his parents' home and sent for Martin, who came with the bad news: the manuscript had disappeared, and all efforts to locate it had failed (Bushman 2005, 67).

The disappearance of the 116-page manuscript created a potentially crippling dilemma for Joseph Smith for two reasons. First, Joseph claimed to have dictated the manuscript by divine inspiration, in a manner that suggested that the text had been revealed to him word for word. Most accounts of the dictation process indicate that Joseph claimed to be enabled supernaturally to "see" a group of words that he would read aloud to his scribe. The scribe would write those words down and then repeat them aloud in order for Joseph to confirm that they agreed with the wording he "saw" before additional words could appear to him (see below, §6.2.4.3). Given that the translation process worked in something like this fashion, the disappearance of the manuscript should have been merely a temporary setback. God could reveal the same words to Joseph again, and in a few months the whole manuscript could be replaced. Of course, if Joseph's translation had not been divinely inspired, he would not be able to reproduce over a hundred pages of material with anything close to such exactness or accuracy.

The second reason for Joseph's dilemma was that he did not know what had happened to the manuscript. Lucy may have taken the manuscript and destroyed it, or she or someone else may have taken the manuscript and was keeping it hidden.

If Joseph could be sure that the manuscript had been destroyed, he could dictate new material to replace it and there would be no problem. However, if the manuscript was actually in someone's possession and Joseph were to dictate new material to replace it, whoever had it might then make it public and point out differences between the two supposedly inspired translations of the same text.

Joseph's dilemma, then, was this. On the one hand, if he chose not to re-dictate the translation of the material represented by the lost pages, his refusal would imply an inability to receive the same translation that he had claimed to receive by divine inspiration. On the other hand, if he did re-dictate a translation of that material and the lost manuscript was made public, any differences between the two versions would also undermine his claim to translate by inspiration.

After returning to Harmony, Joseph wrote two revelations addressing the problem. The first, dated July 1828 and known now as Doctrine and Covenants 3, blamed himself and Martin for the disaster and asserted that God's plan was not frustrated by it. God had entrusted Joseph with the responsibility of the translation work, but Joseph had transgressed God's commandments concerning that work and "feared man more than God" by giving into Martin's pleas to be allowed to take the manuscript (D&C 3:5-7). As a consequence, Joseph said, the Lord had temporarily revoked Joseph's "privileges" as an inspired translator: "And this is the reason that thou hast lost thy privileges for a season" (3:14).

Joseph's second written revelation, dated summer 1828, is now known as Doctrine and Covenants 10, and reveals the solution to the dilemma. This revelation stated that the Lord was restoring Joseph's gift and commissioning him to resume the translation work (D&C 10:3). Joseph went on to claim that Satan had inspired wicked men "to alter the words" he had written. "For he hath put into their hearts to do this, that by lying they may say they have caught you in the words which you have pretended to translate" (10:10-13). The dilemma Joseph faced, according to this revelation, was thus one manufactured by his enemies, who said to themselves that if God did empower Joseph to translate the same text and "he bringeth forth the same words," they would produce the 116 pages that they had "altered" in order to show that they did "not agree" with the new translation (10:16-19).

Joseph went on in this revelation to say that the Lord told him not to re-translate the same material from the gold plates. Joseph claimed that God could

have inspired him to "bring forth the same words" but that doing so would play into the conniving plans of his enemies (D&C 10:30-31). Instead of re-translating the same material, Joseph was to translate material from other plates that contained a parallel account of the same events (10:38-45).

These two revelations are of enormous importance in the development of the LDS religion. They established a precedent for Joseph Smith receiving new revelations and thus for him to function as a prophet and not just an inspired translator. Yet these revelations raised severe difficulties even as they were meant to resolve an existing difficulty.

The most glaring difficulty with these revelations is the claim that Joseph Smith had disobeyed God (D&C 3:5-11; 10:1-3) by allowing Martin Harris to take the manuscript home to show his wife and family. This claim flatly contradicts Joseph's claim that the Lord had granted Martin permission after several requests: "After much solicitation I again inquired of the Lord, and permission was granted him to have the writings" (*HC* 1:21). As they stand, these two claims are irreconcilable.

A number of difficulties arise from the claim that wicked men stole the manuscript and altered it to lay a trap for Joseph if he were to retranslate the same material. Had such men really taken the manuscript with the hope of exposing Joseph as a fraud, they certainly would not have believed that he could duplicate the translation of 116 pages. There would have been no need to alter any of the words of those pages, from their point of view, and doing so might even have been counterproductive: an examination of the differences might expose *them* as frauds if it led to the discovery that they had altered any of the pages. Furthermore, it is highly probable that Lucy Harris, or possibly someone else, destroyed the 116 pages. Once the Book of Mormon was published, anyone in possession of the missing manuscript would have had nothing to lose and much to gain by publishing it.

Another difficulty has to do with the fact that Joseph was unable to learn who had taken the manuscript or where it was. Joseph claimed to have been led by an angel to the location where the gold plates had been buried for fourteen centuries. If an angel could do that for Joseph, he could also show Joseph where to recover the recently lost manuscript. Furthermore, Joseph had one or more seer stones, and supposedly was gifted in using them to find lost items. Yet when it counted most, neither the angel nor the stone could help Joseph find the lost manuscript. Joseph's

claim to receive the revelations recorded in D&C 3 and 10 compounds the problem, since they assert that God knew ahead of time that wicked men would steal the manuscript and that no one could thwart God's plans. If this was true (and one may certainly agree that God knew in advance what would take place), and if God revealed these and other things to Joseph, then God could easily have revealed to Joseph who had the manuscript and where it was. In his preface to the original edition (1830) of the Book of Mormon, Joseph referred to the lost manuscript which he said "*some person or persons* have stolen and kept from me, *notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again*" (emphasis added). Thus, despite his reputed facility with a seer stone and despite supposedly receiving visitations from angels and revelations from God, Joseph was unable to determine who had stolen the manuscript or where it was even after "utmost exertions" to do so.

The most literally incredible claim in D&C 10 is Joseph's assertion that God had anticipated the theft of the manuscript two thousand years earlier and inspired Nephi to produce a second, more religiously significant account parallel to the one that would be stolen. What makes this claim incredible is *not* that it ascribes foreknowledge or omniscience to God. These are divine attributes traditionally recognized in Christianity as essential to God's nature. Nor is it incredible that God would inspire parallel accounts of the same events. There are examples of such parallel accounts in the Bible: most notably, Samuel-Kings is paralleled by Chronicles, and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke give substantially parallel accounts of the ministry and death of Jesus Christ. No, the claim is incredible because it means that God inspired the second account in order to circumvent a problem that would arise only two thousand years later and that would not be a problem at all if Joseph was truly inspired in the way that he claimed. The claim is suspiciously *ad hoc*: there is no evidence to support it and no apparent reason for it except as a convenient way around the dilemma posed by the missing manuscript.

The replacement of the lost 116-page manuscript with a parallel but different account (of which nothing had previously been said) contrasts in a striking way with Jeremiah's replacement of one of his prophecies after a king had thrown it into a fire. Jeremiah had dictated to his scribe Baruch everything that God had said to him up to that point and then sent Baruch to read the scroll in the temple (Jer. 36:1-10), after which it was read to a number of other officials (36:11-15). When the scroll was

later read to King Jehoiakim (36:16-21), Jehoiakim threw it piece by piece into his fireplace, eventually burning the entire scroll (36:22-26). Jeremiah responded to this problem by confidently dictating the same revelations to Baruch to be written on a second scroll (Jer. 36:28, 32). Joseph Smith, on the other hand, dictated a different text after his first manuscript was lost, lest anyone produce the first manuscript and show that the two differed. Jeremiah's act was that of a man who was genuinely inspired by God and not worried about what other people would say; Joseph's act was that of a man who claimed to be inspired but who was obviously quite worried about what other people would say (see further Bowman 2009).

The incident of the missing 116 pages, then, raises serious, troubling questions about the Book of Mormon and about Joseph Smith's claim to be a divinely inspired, angelically guided prophet of God. The problem here is neither modern revelations nor modern angelic visions; the problem is Joseph's own conflicting, implausible attempt to resolve the problem.

6.2.4 Book of Mormon Text

6.2.4.1 Textual Criticism of the Book of Mormon

In the 1980s, Royal Skousen, an English language scholar at BYU, began a comprehensive study of the "textual criticism" of the Book of Mormon, by which is meant not the search for the original text of the gold plates (which if it ever existed is now inaccessible) but the original text of Joseph's English translation. Skousen reviewed the original English manuscript (called O) and the printer's manuscript (called P) and the printed editions from Joseph Smith's lifetime in an effort to establish a more correct Book of Mormon text. His Critical Text Project of the Book of Mormon (on which see Skousen 2002), launched officially in 1988, produced published transcripts of O (Skousen ed. 2001a) and P (Skousen ed. 2001b), a massive six-volume *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon* (see Skousen 2008), and *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (Skousen ed. 2009).

6.2.4.2 Book of Mormon Manuscripts

Following Martin Harris's loss of the 116 pages, work on the translation of the Book of Mormon came to a halt. Over the next half a year little more translating work

was done; any pages that were produced during that time have not survived. From early April to late June 1829, Oliver Cowdery served as Joseph's new scribe, taking dictation for most of the Book of Mormon (see Skousen 2009b). Once the translation was complete, Joseph had Oliver produce a second handwritten manuscript for use by the printer (P) by copying the dictation manuscript (O).

Only about 28 percent of O (not counting the lost 116 pages), which for forty-one years was kept in the cornerstone of Nauvoo House and was severely damaged by water and mold, is now extant. Unfortunately, the entire section of 3 Nephi concerning Christ's first appearance to the Nephites (3 Ne. 11-18), including the Sermon at the Temple (ST), is not included in the extant portions of O (Skousen ed. 2001a, 37).

Of the extant portions of O, Oliver Cowdery was the scribe for all but four relatively short portions. One unknown scribe wrote 1 Nephi 3:7-4:14 and 12:9-16:1, while another unknown scribe wrote 1 Nephi 4:20-12:8.

While nearly three-fourths of O was destroyed, P has survived essentially intact (it is missing only portions from 1 Nephi 1:7-8, 20, and a stray letter or word in some places) and is in the possession of the Community of Christ. Here again, Cowdery was the main scribe, penning about 85 percent of the text of P. The manuscript of P was also marked up by John Gilbert, the compositor for the first edition of the Book of Mormon in 1830, mostly with capitalization, punctuation, and spelling corrections, and by Joseph Smith when he edited P in preparation for the second edition published in 1837 (Skousen ed. 2001b, 15-19).

According to Skousen, about one-sixth of the first printed edition of the Book of Mormon actually followed O rather than P. This portion that was based on O ran from Helaman 13:17 through the end of Mormon (Skousen ed. 2009, xxx) and thus included the ST (though, as noted above, O is not actually extant for the ST).

6.2.4.3 Textual Criticism and the Original Manuscript

The "original manuscript" (O) of the Book of Mormon is of obvious interest to those seeking to determine as exactly as possible the words that Joseph Smith originally used in dictating the text of the Book of Mormon. Its potential significance goes even further, as some researchers argue that O is a window into *how* Joseph

produced the Book of Mormon, and that it might even offer some evidence for or against his receiving it by divine inspiration.

There are actually several steps or stages in the production of the Book of Mormon, assuming the conventional LDS belief regarding its inspiration (for a similar list see Skousen 2002, 6-7). (1) Joseph in some fashion saw words or received ideas as revelation in his mind as he looked at the seer stone in his hat. (2) Joseph dictated aloud words to his scribe. (3) The scribe wrote down what he heard Joseph say in a manuscript (O). (4) What was written down by the scribe was later copied into a new manuscript (P). (5) Joseph, one or more scribes, and the compositor marked up P in preparation for printing. (6) The publishers created a typesetting of the book based on the marked-up P.

Presumably mistakes were possible at most or every step of this process. Joseph might have seen or understood incorrectly; he might have misspoken when he dictated; the scribe might have heard Joseph incorrectly; the scribe might have written something other than he heard; O might have been copied incorrectly in P; markings done in P might have been incorrect; and the publishers might have made mistakes in following the marked-up P. Mormon scholars have acknowledged all or nearly all of these categories of mistakes, though, understandably, they tend to emphasize that most of the mistakes were committed by the scribes and publishers.

If one simply accepts at face value the various statements by Joseph's family and associates who claimed to know how Joseph dictated the Book of Mormon, when he looked into the hat he was able to see English words in the seer stone, which he then dictated to his scribe. The scribe would read the text back to Joseph to make sure it was correct, and once the scribe had correctly written what Joseph saw, the words would disappear from the stone and Joseph would see a new string of words to dictate (Skousen 1997, 62-66). Had this really happened, of course, then every word of O would have been correct. There would be no vocabulary or grammatical mistakes—perhaps even no spelling mistakes—in the Book of Mormon. This would be what Skousen called "iron-clad control" of the wording of the translation (65). However, as everyone agrees (e.g., Ash 2013, 210-11), O contained thousands of spelling mistakes, numerous grammatical mistakes, and at least some vocabulary errors—many of which were corrected by Joseph and his associates in the 1837 and 1840 editions. This fact rules out the "iron-clad" view that

the exact words of the translation were revealed to Joseph and accurately recorded by the scribes. Yet if this view is untenable, as virtually everyone agrees, then the accounts of Joseph's translation methodology by his family and associates have implicitly been shown to be untrustworthy.

Skousen favoured a view he calls "tight control," which he defined as follows: "Joseph Smith saw specific words written out in English and read them off to the scribe—the accuracy of the resulting text depending on the carefulness of Joseph Smith and his scribe" (Skousen 1997, 65). He accepted as factual the claim that Joseph saw words in his seer stone but denied the claim made by the same people that the words remained until the transcription was perfect (66). Although there are dissenters, Skousen's "tight control" model now dominates conservative LDS explanations and defences of the Book of Mormon. John Welch, whose views on the ST are of special importance in this present study, accepted Skousen's model (Welch 1999, 190). Although the 2013 LDS Church statement on Book of Mormon translation did not discuss the various translation models overtly, its exposition depended heavily on the work of Skousen and implicitly accepted his model (Intellectual Reserve 2013a).

According to Skousen, the scribal errors in O provide compelling evidence for the tight control model. He argued, first of all, that the errors show that O was produced by dictation because the errors are such that they were most likely caused by mishearing "rather than by visually misreading while copying from another manuscript" (Skousen 1997, 67). For example, he noted that in 1 Nephi 13:29 the scribe wrote "& because of these things which are taken away out of the gosple of the Lamb & exceeding great many do stumble." Here the second ampersand (*&*) is contextually impossible; the correct word clearly was *an*, which was misheard as *and*. Had the scribe been copying the text, he would not likely have written *&* in place of *an*; therefore, this mistake was auditory rather than visual in origin. Skousen gave several more such examples, not all as definitive as this one, but nevertheless generally supportive of his conclusion that Joseph dictated the text to his scribes.

Assuming Joseph dictated the translation to his scribes, it is possible that parts were dictated with Joseph looking into his hat and other parts dictated with Joseph looking at a text and making whatever changes he wished as he went along. If the eyewitnesses are to be believed, Joseph did not have a manuscript from which

he was dictating. However, he might have dictated the biblical chapters with a Bible at hand. Since even Skousen and other conservative Mormon scholars agree that the eyewitnesses' reports are not entirely reliable, the textual evidence must be given full weight in assessing whether Joseph used a Bible in dictating the biblical chapters of the Book of Mormon. The importance of this point with regard to the ST is obvious, as it is also for the Isaiah chapters in the Book of Mormon.

That Joseph dictated the text of O to the scribes is a necessary precondition of "tight control" but not evidence for it. In order to establish tight control, Skousen presented a variety of evidence for the view that Joseph saw words in the seer stone. However, most if not all of this evidence can be easily explained in other ways. For example, according to Skousen, the textual evidence of O shows not only that it was dictated to scribes but that Joseph Smith was seeing and dictating about twenty to thirty words at a time. One example is at Alma 56:41, which in O reads, "& it came to pass that again ~~we saw the Lamanites~~ when the light of the morning came we saw the Lamanites upon us." As Skousen plausibly suggested, what probably happened here was that by the time Oliver had written "& it came to pass that again," Joseph had gotten ahead of Oliver and was saying "we saw the Lamanites," and Oliver wrote those words and then realized he had missed part of the dictation. Skousen inferred that "Joseph Smith had at least twenty words in view as he was dictating" (Skousen 1997, 72). However, this inference does not follow from the evidence. All that can confidently inferred is that Joseph *dictated* something like twenty or thirty words at a time—not that Joseph was *reading* twenty to thirty words at a time. It is typical that when one person is dictating and another is writing as a scribe, the speaker will speak at a particular pace and often in a certain amount of words or phrases at a time, and the scribe will try to keep pace.

Skousen also argued that the testimony of witnesses to Joseph's translation work as well as the internal evidence of O both show that Joseph spelled out unfamiliar names of persons and places when he was dictating. He cited as examples the crossing out of "Zenock" and its replacement with "Zenoch" in O at Alma 33:15 and the rewriting of "Coriantummer" as "Coriantumr" at Helaman 1:15 (Skousen 1997, 75-76). While it does appear that Joseph spelled out such names for his scribes, it does not follow that Joseph *saw* these names spelled out for him in

the seer stone. He may simply have come up with these names on his own and spelled them for his scribes.

One other argument for tight control may be briefly considered here. Skousen cited one instance of a fairly long string of words that appears in two widely separated contexts in the Book of Mormon. 1 Nephi 1:8 states that Lehi "*thought* he *saw God sitting upon his throne surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God*." Later Alma says, "me*thought* I *saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God*" (Alma 36:22). Skousen concluded, "This identity of quotation provides striking support for a theory of tight control over the translation" (Skousen 1997, 88). This argument is problematic as evidence for tight control since the first chapter of 1 Nephi is missing from O. The twenty-word string shared by the two passages is consistent with tight control but weak evidence for it.

In conclusion, while Skousen has done admirable and informative work on the textual history of the Book of Mormon, the evidence he has presented does not show that Joseph Smith saw words supernaturally conveyed to him when he was translating the Book of Mormon.

6.2.4.4 Printed Editions of the Book of Mormon

A local printer, E. B. Grandin of Palmyra, New York, typeset and published the first edition of the Book of Mormon, released on March 26, 1830 with an initial printing of 5,000 copies. Eleven days later, Joseph Smith founded the Church of Christ (as he then called it) on April 6, 1830. A photo-offset reproduction of the first edition was published by Wilford C. Wood in 1958.

The Book of Mormon went through three editions during Joseph Smith's lifetime. The second edition was published in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1837. According to Skousen, only P, not O, was consulted in producing this edition (Skousen ed. 2009, xxx). Thousands of grammatical and spelling changes were made to the text as well as some theologically significant revisions. In 1840 Joseph published a third edition of the Book of Mormon, this time in Nauvoo, Illinois, with additional changes.

6.2.4.5 Text of the Book of Mormon Used in This Study

Since this study is an inquiry into the historical authenticity of the ST, the primary source of this study must be the Book of Mormon as Joseph Smith delivered it. The original English manuscript (O) for this portion of the Book of Mormon is no longer extant, but it was evidently used as the basis for the first printed edition in 1830, rather than the printer's manuscript (P) which was used for most of the Book of Mormon. The primary source text of the Book of Mormon used in this study, then, will be that first, 1830 edition, though any relevant revisions made under Joseph Smith's direction in the 1837 and 1840 editions may be considered. The textual critical reference works on the Book of Mormon, especially those produced by Royal Skousen, will be consulted.

6.2.5 The Plates, the Books, and the Order of Translation

The crisis of the lost 116 pages led to the production of the Book of Mormon as a far more complex text than it would otherwise have been. As mentioned above (§6.2.3), Joseph claimed that the Lord had instructed him to translate a different group of plates to replace the lost translation. Those lost pages were supposedly a translation of Mormon's abridgment of a group of plates known as the Large Plates of Nephi. Rather than re-translate the same material from those plates, Joseph was told to translate in their place the "Small Plates of Nephi," which gave a briefer account paralleling the one that had been lost. Nephi is credited with writing all but the last 18 percent of the text on these "small plates," which he passed to his brother Jacob, from whom the plates passed from father to son or brother, each of whom wrote only a few sentences. The text said to be translated from the "small plates" constitutes about 27 percent of the entire Book of Mormon. Further, the last two chapters of Mormon's concluding writing (confusingly also called the Book of Mormon) is purportedly written by his son Moroni, who also wrote the last two books entitled Ether and Moroni. These contributions by Moroni add up to just less than 10 percent of the entirety of the Book of Mormon. This leaves 63 percent of the Book of Mormon attributed to Mormon himself (see Table 35).

From one perspective, the Book of Mormon appears to have three main authors: Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni (the basic premise of Hardy 2010). From another perspective, it appears to cobble together two works: the Small Plates of

Nephi, written primarily by Nephi with brief additions by Jacob and several others, and the second half of the Plates of Mormon, written primarily by Mormon with brief additions by his son Moroni. The first work would have been completed in the first century BC, while the second work would have been written mostly in the late fourth and early fifth centuries AD (cf. Lyon and Minson 2012, 135 n. 4).

Table 35. Book of Mormon Plates, Authors, and Books			
Plates	**Author**	**Book**	**Chaps.**
(Small) Plates of Nephi	Nephi	1 Nephi	22
		2 Nephi	33
	Jacob	Jacob	7
	Enos	Enos	1
	Jarom	Jarom	1
	Omni and three others; Amaleki	Omni	1
Plates of Mormon	Mormon	Words of Mormon	1
	Mormon *(abridgment of the Large Plates of Nephi)*	Mosiah	29
		Alma	63
		Helaman	16
		3 Nephi	30
		4 Nephi	1
	Mormon (1-7) and Moroni (8-9)	Book of Mormon	9
	Moroni *(his abridgment of Ether's 24 plates)*	Ether	15
	Moroni	Moroni	10

The cobbling together of the Small Plates of Nephi and the Plates of Mormon results in a somewhat ragged "seam" where they join. Following the conclusion of the Small Plates of Nephi (at the end of the Book of Omni), a short book entitled The Words of Mormon appears as an explanation of Mormon's editorial work. Mormon states that after he "had made an abridgment from the plates of Nephi" (referring to a *different* set of plates than the "Small Plates"), he found a "small account of the prophets" from Jacob to King Benjamin "and also many of the words of Nephi" (Words 1:3). This "small account" is understood to be the Small Plates of Nephi, represented in the English Book of Mormon as the first six books preceding Mormon's explanation here. Mormon says that because this smaller account contained "choice" prophecies and revelations, he decided to put them with his own record (1:4-6). He then comments, "And I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me," because although he does not know everything the Lord does (1:7). This comment refers obliquely to the "purpose" of having a parallel yet different backup narrative that could be used to replace the lost 116 pages without needing to

reproduce those lost pages themselves. Mormon concludes his explanation by reporting that the plates had been handed down from Benjamin to each generation concluding with Mormon himself (1:10-11).

Next comes the uneven part of the "seam": the remaining seven verses of Words of Mormon (1:12-18) rather abruptly begin narrating events in the reign of Benjamin, a narration that continues in the following Book of Mosiah. LDS scholars have proposed two very different explanations for these verses. Jack Lyon and Kent Minson have argued that these verses were originally the end of the second chapter of the Book of Mosiah, and that the Book of Mosiah's present chapter 1 was originally its third chapter (Lyon and Minson 2012; see also Skousen 1994, 138-39). The printer's manuscript (see below, §6.2.4.2) actually shows that it had "Chapter III" immediately after the title "The Book of Mosiah" and that Oliver Cowdery crossed out the final two characters to change it to say "Chapter I" and inserted "The Book of Mosiah" above the line (for a transcription see Skousen ed. 2001b, 284). While this textual evidence seems to support Lyon and Minson's view, Brant Gardner has offered another explanation: that Joseph Smith composed those verses to summarize the lost narrative at the end of the 116 pages (Gardner 2013). In his view the change in numbering occurred because Oliver Cowdery had first thought that Words of Mormon was a second chapter of Omni and that the opening part of Mosiah was Omni's third chapter. Without the original manuscript that Oliver and other scribes produced for this part of the Book of Mormon, it appears difficult to rule out either explanation.

One point on which nearly all researchers agree is that Words of Mormon was the final book of the Book of Mormon's fifteen books to be dictated by Joseph Smith. This may seem strange since it is the seventh book in the canonical sequence, but the reason goes back once again to the problem of the lost 116 pages. Since Joseph did not know whether the lost manuscript would show up or not, he had announced that he was going to translate a different account in its place. But when he resumed his dictation he did not begin with that account (on the "Small Plates of Nephi"), but instead continued dictating where he had left off in the narrative, near the beginning of the reign of Benjamin (at or about the beginning of the current Book of Mosiah). Only after dictating the remainder of the books through Moroni did he produce the translation of the Small Plates (1 Nephi through Omni) to replace the

narrative that covered the period from Lehi to Benjamin (Table 36; see Metcalfe 1993; Skousen ed. 2001a, 33; Backman 2003, 159; Goff 2004; Welch 2005, 115-17 n. 111; Gardner 2011, 298-99; Lyon and Minson 2012, 122-23).

Table 36. Translation Order of the Book of Mormon				
Book	**Translation Order**	**Canonical Order**	**Chaps.**	**Plates**
Mosiah	1	8	29	Plates of Mormon 470 Years (73%)
Alma	2	9	63	
Helaman	3	10	16	
3 Nephi	4	11	30	
4 Nephi	5	12	1	
Book of Mormon	6	13	9	
Ether	7	14	15	
Moroni	8	15	10	
1 Nephi	9	1	22	Small Plates of Nephi 560 Years (27%)
2 Nephi	10	2	33	
Jacob	11	3	7	
Enos	12	4	1	
Jarom	13	5	1	
Omni	14	6	1	
Words of Mormon	15	7	1	Plates of Mormon

Since the matter is not in dispute, just one of the several reasons for this "Mosiah-first" understanding of the order in which the books were produced will be mentioned here. Joseph's closest associates first learned in June 1829 "that three special witnesses" would be allowed to "see the plates" when Joseph dictated a passage in the Book of Mormon promising this would take place. The passage was 2 Nephi 27:12 (see above, §6.2.1.4.1). Because the dictation of the entire Book of Mormon was finished by the end of June, 2 Nephi must have been translated toward the end of the process, not close to the beginning (Welch 2005, 115-16 n. 111).

Even a cursory glance at the data in Table 36 reveals a notable difference between the two parts of the Book of Mormon. The account from the Small Plates of Nephi covers a longer period of time than the account from the Plates of Mormon, yet the former is roughly a third the length of the latter. The individual books also get noticeably short immediately after the two books of Nephi. The books of Enos, Jarom, and Omni cover about four centuries in just seven pages (out of the 531 pages in current printed editions).

Of course, there are long and short books in the Bible (Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John are very short), but the brevity of the books representing the end of the Small

Plates does not seem to be the result of random variations in the lengths of the fifteen books in the Book of Mormon. Rather, it is far more likely that Joseph produced these short books in order to replace the lost 116 pages in such a way as to minimize the risk of the new text conflicting with the lost text, should it resurface. Several lines of evidence support this conclusion.

1. The two books of 1 and 2 Nephi are the only lengthy books in the Small Plates section of the Book of Mormon, yet even these books would be much shorter except for their use of Isaiah. Of the 55 chapters in these two books, 18 are taken from Isaiah in a 30-chapter stretch that includes 13 consecutive chapters of Isaiah quoted without interruption (1 Ne. 20-21; 2 Ne. 7-8, 12-24, 27). Two pieces of internal evidence from these books lead to the conclusion that the Isaiah chapters were added basically as filler. First, the books of 1 and 2 Nephi repeatedly comment on the lack of room on the plates to write things of significance, even apologizing for the omissions (1 Ne. 6:1-6; 9:1-5; 17:6; 19:3-6; 2 Ne. 31:1; 33:1). One of these comments (1 Ne. 19:3-6) comes just before the lengthy excerpts from Isaiah begin (1 Ne. 20-21). Second, these books also mention repeatedly that the family of Lehi took with them to the New World the "plates of brass," which included the Book of Isaiah 1 Ne. 5:10-19; 19:21-22; 2 Ne. 4:2, 15; cf. Mosiah 28:11, 20; Alma 37:3-5; 3 Ne. 1:2). The plates of brass are a necessary plot device to explain *how* the books of 1-2 Nephi could include so much material from Isaiah, but they also undermine the plausibility of the author devoting so much of his limited writing material to duplicating over one-fourth of the Book of Isaiah.

2. The Book of Omni has rather pointless, perfunctory statements by successive prophets that add essentially nothing to the record but are there to maintain the chronological thread. Omni informs his readers that he got the plates from his father Jarom, that there were times of war and of peace, that 282 years had passed (since Lehi's journey began), and that he gave the plates to his son Amaron (Omni 1:1-3). Amaron gives a similar notice (Omni 1:4-8), as does his brother Chemish (1:9) and Chemish's son Abinadom (1:10-11). Only when the narrative reaches the time of Mosiah and Benjamin does the last prophet writing on the Small Plates, Amaleki, have anything remotely of substance to say (1:12-30). The content of the first part of the Book of Omni therefore appears to have been written specifically to get the narrative down as quickly as possible to the period that is

covered in the Plates of Mormon. Yet there is no reason to think that Omni, Amaron, Chemish, and Abinadom would be writing with that purpose.

3. What narrative material is included in the seven books of the Small Plates is very sparse with regard to the sorts of narrative details that characterize the Plates of Mormon narrative. The Book of Mormon admits the sparseness of the Small Plates narrative (1 Ne. 6:1-6; 9:1-4; 2 Ne. 4:14-15; 5:29-33; Jacob 3:13) but explains that such narrative was omitted in order to include more valuable material, specifically preaching, prophecies, visions, and other revelations (1 Ne. 19:1-7; Jacob 1:2-4; Words of Mormon 1:3-6). This explanation is not only undermined by the inclusion of so much material from Isaiah, as noted above, but also by the existence side by side of needlessly vague statements and *ad hoc* explanations for their vagueness. An example of this phenomenon comes in Jacob 1, where Jacob says, "Now Nephi began to be old, and he saw that he must soon die; wherefore, he anointed a man to be a king and a ruler over his people now, according to the reigns of the kings" (Jacob 1:9). Here Jacob gives no name for the king, which is peculiar. But then Jacob, seemingly aware that a name is expected, gives a suspiciously convenient explanation: the people loved Nephi so much that they "were desirous to retain in remembrance his name. And whoso should reign in his stead were called by the people, second Nephi, third Nephi, and so forth, according to the reigns of the kings; and thus they were called by the people, let them be of whatever name they would" (1:11). Be that as it may, surely Jacob would have known the man's actual name (since they were contemporaries), and it would have taken only one or two words to give that name. It is the *ad hoc* nature of the excuses given in these books for their lack of narrative detail that is the telling context for what Jerald and Sandra Tanner called the "black hole" in the Book of Mormon (Tanner and Tanner 1990).

4. A rarely noticed fact is that the Book of Mormon references to the various plates involved indicate that they included not just two, but *three* parallel accounts of the period from Lehi to Benjamin: (a) the Large Plates of Nephi, engraved by Nephi and other prophets from Jacob to Amaleki, (b) Mormon's abridgment of the Large Plates of Nephi, i.e., a shorter version of the same account but written by Mormon himself, and (c) the Small Plates of Nephi, also written by Nephi and the succeeding prophets. Supposedly the lost 116 pages were translated from Mormon's abridgment of the Large Plates and the current, canonical 1 Nephi through Omni were translated

from the Small Plates. The idea of Mormon being inspired to produce an abridgment of the Large Plates, only afterward discovering the Small Plates, resulting in three parallel accounts, all apparently in order to give Joseph Smith something safe to "translate" after losing the 116 pages, is so *ad hoc* that it is simply not credible.

It is truly ironic that in this part of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith would include a passage supposedly prophesying that many things would be taken out of the Bible (1 Ne. 13:23-29). It is the Book of Mormon, on its own admission, that is missing far more than any part of the Bible might be imagined to be missing.

6.3 Language and Idiom

The earliest extant, if not the original, language of the Book of Mormon is English. However, LDS scholars have put forward a variety of arguments to support the belief that the Book of Mormon was translated from an ancient language text. The purpose of this section is not to offer a thorough refutation of those arguments, a worthy study in its own right. Rather, this section presents an overview of the issues pertaining to the Book of Mormon's supposed original language as a necessary orientation to the task of examining the language of the ST.

6.3.1 Reformed Egyptian

The Book of Mormon contains several statements specifically commenting on the language in which it was supposedly written. One of these statements comes right at the beginning of the book, in which Nephi states: "I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Ne. 1:2). At the beginning of the book of Mosiah, the reader is informed that King Benjamin had three sons and that "he caused that they should be taught in all the language of his fathers, that thereby they might become men of understanding; and that they might know concerning the prophecies which had been spoken by the mouths of their fathers, which were delivered them by the hand of the Lord" (Mosiah 1:2). The book states that Lehi, the patriarch who took his family to the New World, taught his children to be able to read the "plates of brass" they had brought with them: "having been taught in the language of the Egyptians therefore he could read these engravings, and teach them to his children, that thereby they could teach them to their children, and so fulfilling the commandments of God, even

down to this present time" (1:3-4). Later in the same book, the text refers to "the language of the Nephites" or "the language of Nephi" (9:1; 24:4), suggesting that by this time the Nephites and Lamanites (the two main people groups descended from Lehi) had developed distinct languages.

Near the end of the Book of Mormon, the prophet Mormon offers some extended comments on the matter—and even something of an apology! He says, "we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech" (Mormon 9:32). He goes on to apologize for not having written in Hebrew: "And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record" (9:33). Mormon then acknowledges "that none other people knoweth our language" and says that because the Lord knew this to be the case, "he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof" (9:34), referring no doubt to the "interpreters" that Mormons call the Urim and Thummim (see §6.2.1.8).

A little-noticed but perhaps significant fact about these statements is that they are unusual simply by their presence in the text. Most writers do not comment on the language in which they write. No OT or NT writer, for example, comments on the fact that he is writing in Hebrew or Greek. The reason this is so is easy to understand: most writers are writing for people who read and usually speak the same language, who are part of the same culture, and who therefore do not need to be told the language that they are reading. These several statements in the Book of Mormon about the language in which it was written, and about the language of the other scriptures in the "plates of brass," are not there for the benefit of ancient readers. They are there for modern readers—for those reading Joseph Smith's translation.

The point merits further elaboration from another perspective. The purpose of writing is shared communication with others capable of reading the language in the form in which it is written. In general, the Book of Mormon does not purport to have been written for the purpose of shared communication with other people in the ancient world. Mormon and Moroni, the principal authors and editors of the Book of Mormon, are presented in the text as writing not for themselves but for a society in the distant future. They wrote, apparently, in a language that would never be read.

Even Joseph Smith never read the Book of Mormon in its "reformed Egyptian" characters or language; as has been documented and explained above, Joseph did not even look at the plates while he was dictating his "translation." In a sense, then, the language of the gold plates is irrelevant, since they were never meant to be read. The Nephite prophets could have made random, meaningless scratches on the plates and it would not matter at all, since the plates were never meant to be read. This scenario may be *possible* in some abstract or hypothetical fashion, but that is far different from claiming that it is *plausible*.

Another fact about these internal statements about the Book of Mormon language or languages is their vagueness. Brian Stubbs, a Mormon linguist, acknowledged that "statements in the Book of Mormon have spawned differing views about the language in which the book was originally written…. It is unknown whether Nephi, Mormon, or Moroni wrote Hebrew in modified Egyptian characters or inscribed their plates in both the Egyptian language and Egyptian characters or whether Nephi wrote in one language and Mormon and Moroni, who lived some nine hundred years later, in another" (*EM*, 1:179). Given how unusual it is for writers to say anything about the language in which they are writing, the fact that the statements given, especially the lengthy comment in Mormon 9:32-34, yield more questions than they do answers suggests studied ambiguity, not unintended vagueness. After all, these are supposedly inspired statements written for the benefit of modern readers of Joseph's inspired translation. So why are they so ambiguous?

As Stubbs pointed out, the reference to "the language of the Egyptians" in 1 Nephi 1:2 suggests that the text was written in Egyptian, while the reference to "characters" in Mormon 9:32 can be understood to imply that the text was written in Hebrew words and grammar but using Egyptian characters or script. Mormon 9:33 explicitly denies that the text was composed in Hebrew, but many and perhaps most LDS scholars today think this means only that Egyptian characters were used instead of Hebrew because the former took up less room on the plates. In practice, then, many LDS scholars now treat the Book of Mormon as if its original language was Hebrew, despite Mormon 9:33.

Considered as an historical matter, the Book of Mormon's claim that it was engraved in Egyptian characters is again possible but not particularly plausible. Presumably some Jews around 600 BC were able to read and write in some form of

Egyptian script, though nothing is said specifically about Lehi to explain why he and his children would have done so. Recall that the Book of Mormon begins with Nephi's statement that the language of his father and of his own writing "consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians" (1 Ne. 1:2). Yet Lehi was an Israelite who had "dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days" (1:4). Granted that a Jerusalemite being able to read and write in Egyptian was a possibility, it is still implausible that "the language" of an Israelite who had lived his whole life in Jerusalem in the late seventh century BC would have been Egyptian or some Egyptian-Hebrew hybrid. By "the language of my father" Nephi seems to mean Lehi's *first* language, his mother tongue; yet as an Israelite and lifelong Jerusalemite surely his primary language would have been Hebrew.

The fact that Lehi and his son Nephi were both Israelite prophets makes it all the more implausible that they would break with tradition and write prophetic literature using Egyptian language or even Egyptian characters—especially in a culture a hemisphere away from Egyptian civilization! Up to that point in time all of the Jewish Scriptures had been written in Hebrew, and the Book of Mormon gives no plausible reason why Lehi's line of prophets would deviate from this tradition. When Jews began writing religious literature in Aramaic and later in Greek, it was because their people were living in a world where those were the dominant languages and were widely used by Jews. The NT books were all written originally in Greek because that was the language that Christians, both Jewish and non-Jewish, were most likely to understand.

6.3.2 Hebrew, Egyptian, and Mesoamerican Languages

Archaeologists have found no evidence for either Egyptian or Hebrew in use as a written language in the Western Hemisphere during the principal time period of the Book of Mormon narrative (ca. 600 BC—AD 400). What Brian Stubbs admitted in the 1992 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* still holds true today: "no study has yet convinced scholars of Near Eastern links with any pre-Columbian American language" (*EM*, 1:180). In that entry, Stubbs held out hope that his own research comparing the Uto-Aztecan language family (his field of academic expertise) to Hebrew might establish such a link. That same year, a brief three-page essay summarizing his argument appeared in a collection of essays defending the

historicity of the Book of Mormon (Stubbs 1992). A lengthier article a few years later made systematic comparisons of ancient Hebrew words and forms to those of Uto-Aztecan languages (Stubbs 1996). Nearly two decades later, neither Stubbs nor any other scholar has advanced his case in any significant way. His work is nevertheless popularly cited in Mormon defences of the idea of a Hebrew-speaking people in the ancient Americas (e.g., Ash 2013, 219-20).

Meanwhile, mainstream scholars studying the history of languages in the Americas have developed a fairly comprehensive and surprisingly detailed account of the historical origins and genealogical relationships of those languages. One such scholar, Kathryn Josserand, has surveyed four major language families in ancient Mesoamerica, arguing that "enough is known about most of these Mesoamerican languages for at least the outlines of their history to be discernible" (Josserand 2011, 157). Uto-Aztecan, one of those four major language families, "came into Mesoamerica from the U.S. Southwest relatively late in prehistory, leaving a trail of languages down through western Mexico to the Valley of Mexico and ultimately displacing earlier families throughout the culture area as far south as Costa Rica" (143). It began diversifying around 4600 BC into a North American branch, from which came the Hopi, Shoshonean, and other languages, and a Mexican branch that eventually included Aztec in Central Mexico roughly AD 600-800 and Pipil in Central America (155). It does not seem likely that a language family with this history can meaningfully be associated with the arrival of Hebrew-speaking people in Mesoamerica via transoceanic travel around 600 BC.

The difficulty facing Book of Mormon apologists is that linguists have classified the indigenous languages of Mesoamerica and correlated linguistic comparative data with archaeological and textual information to develop a fairly detailed understanding of the origins of these languages (see Lastra 2001, 123-31). "At present, the classification of Mesoamerican languages is controversial only at the level of subgroups; the family and phylum affiliation of the languages is well established" (125). As a result, the most hopeful claim Mormon scholars can make is that an ancient Hebrew-speaking and Egyptian-writing people may have lived in Mesoamerica and yet left no trace yet discovered by archaeologists. John Sorenson, for example, suggested that linguistic evidence of an Old World migration to the New World might be lacking even if it occurred, as in the case of the Vikings in Greenland

(J. Sorenson 2013, 176). This explanation seems weak given the Book of Mormon's claim that its peoples built a great civilization that lasted about a millennium.

6.3.3 Affectation of Biblical Style

One mark of an amateur forger is that he will often make a concerted, self-conscious effort to imitate the style expected in the text. This may then show up in the form of excessive use of specific expressions associated with the original that is being imitated. Examples of such affectation of biblical style are easy to find in the Book of Mormon.

No doubt the most famous example is the heavy use of "(and) it came to pass" in the Book of Mormon. This expression occurred just over 1,400 times in the original edition; the exact number has been reported as 1,404 (Parry 1992) or 1,414 (Wunderli 2013, 115). (In the current, 2013 edition, "it came to pass" occurs 1,359 times.) In most of these occurrences, the word "and" is part of the expression (1,122 times in the 2013 edition). Since there are about 267,000 words in the Book of Mormon, this means that roughly one out of every fifty words in the Book of Mormon is part of this expression. Mark Twain's famous joke that had Joseph Smith omitted "and it came to pass" the Book of Mormon would only have been a pamphlet (cited in Parry 1992) seems a rather appropriate hyperbole.

Since most of the Book of Mormon is narrative, the number of occurrences of "it came to pass" may be fairly compared to the historical books of the OT. The books of Genesis through 1 Chronicles, excluding the statute-heavy books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, have about 284,000 words in the KJV, and so taken together are just slightly longer than the Book of Mormon. The Hebrew expression *wayehî* ("it came to pass") occurs 622 times in these twelve books, less than half of the more than 1,400 occurrences in the Book of Mormon (for additional problems with the Book of Mormon usage of "and it came to pass," see Finley 2002, 347-51).

Three other words found disproportionately in the Book of Mormon that appear to be examples of affectations of biblical style are the words *behold*, *exceeding(ly)*, and *yea*. Restricting the pool of data in the OT to the same twelve narrative books as discussed above, the word *behold* appears 517 times in the KJV of those OT books but 1,782 times in the Book of Mormon—more than three times as often. The words *exceeding* and *exceedingly* occur a combined total of 32 times

in those OT books but 309 times in the Book of Mormon—almost ten times as often. The word *yea* occurs only 16 times in those OT books but 1,248 times in the Book of Mormon—more than *75 times* as often. The word *yea* occurs 275 times in the KJV of the entire OT, making it a recognizable, biblical-sounding word, but it is used quite rarely in the narrative books. The KJV used *yea* to render different Hebrew words (notably *'aph* and *gam*) which it rightly translated in different ways depending on context; thus, appealing to the Hebrew will not eliminate the marked disparity.

The best that can be said in defense of the Book of Mormon on this issue is that Joseph Smith, inspired to produce a translation of a scripture similar to the Bible, naturally drew on biblical idioms with which he was familiar. Whether such an explanation is consistent with the manner in which Joseph claimed to translate is a difficult question even for Mormon scholars, who disagree among themselves as to what sort of "translation" the Book of Mormon is (see §6.3.6 below). At the same time, the explanation that Joseph was deliberately trying to make his fictional ancient narrative sound biblical deserves to be taken seriously. Either way, what seems reasonably certain is that Joseph's overuse of such biblical expressions is evidence against anything like a word-for-word revelation of the translation. It is also critical evidence against what may be the most popular argument for the antiquity of the Book of Mormon: its supposed Hebraisms.

6.3.4 Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon

Mormon scholars have written frequently to show that the Book of Mormon exhibits numerous examples of different kinds of Hebraisms—grammatical or verbal forms of expression common in biblical Hebrew that are not awkward or redundant in English. The presence of such Hebraisms is adduced as evidence that the Book of Mormon is translation English, specifically a translation from an original language that was Hebraic or Hebrew-like in form (e.g., Barney 1994, 1999; Parry 2002; Skousen 1994, 1999; Tvedtnes 1970, 1991). These supposed evidences of antiquity have been fully embraced by the LDS Church: "In addition, some grammatical constructions that are more characteristic of Near Eastern languages than English appear in the original manuscript, suggesting that the base language of the translation was not English" (Intellectual Reserve 2013a).

The claim that the English Book of Mormon exhibits distinctively Hebraic grammar and idiom presupposes, among other things, that the translation was a woodenly literal one in which the English text was composed according to a word-for-word methodology. So, for example, one Hebraic form that Mormon scholars find in abundance in the Book of Mormon is the construct state, in which the possessive or descriptive noun follows the head noun, as in "house of the king" rather than "the king's house." Thus the Book of Mormon says "plates of brass" rather than "brass plates," "words of plainness" instead of "plain words," and "night of darkness" rather than "dark night" (Tvedtnes 1991, 79). The Hebraic hypothesis is that the gold plates used the construct state that is characteristic of biblical Hebrew and that Joseph was simply giving a word-for-word equivalent in English reflecting the grammatical structure of the underlying Hebrew.

If this hypothesis were correct, one would not expect to find many places in the Book of Mormon where the more idiomatic English wording appears instead of the construct state. Yet there are plenty of such places. For example, the construct-state wording "land of promise" occurs 22 times in the Book of Mormon, but the more idiomatic English expression "promised land" occurs 20 times—not 10 times, as Tvedtnes claimed (Tvedtnes 1991, 79; cf. Wunderli 2013, 231-32). While the Book of Mormon does use the wording "night of darkness" (Alma 34:33; 41:7), it also uses "dark night" (Moroni 7:15). The Book of Mormon uses the construct-state wording "words of plainness" (Jacob 4:14) but also "plain road" (2 Nephi 4:32), "plain terms" (Alma 13:23), and "plain humility" (Ether 12:39). One finds both "works of righteousness" (Alma 5:16; see also 5:35, 36) and, *in the very next sentence*, "righteous works" (Alma 5:17), the very wording Tvedtnes claimed that the Book of Mormon does not use. The Book of Mormon even uses the possessive form "king's" eight times (Mosiah 7:7; 18:34; 20:17; 24:9; Alma 18:3, 13; 22:2, 20).

Given the inconsistency in the Book of Mormon's use of such forms, it is far more likely that their presence in the Book of Mormon is due to imitation of the KJV, which also frequently but not uniformly reflects such Hebraic elements (see further Finley 2002, 342-52; Wunderli 2013, 228-43). Even LDS scholar Brant Gardner inclined to this explanation (Gardner 2011, 165-76; see also Gardner 2013a).

6.3.5 What Kind of Translation Is the Book of Mormon?

Already some notice has been given of the difficulties in describing what sort of translation Joseph Smith is supposed to have produced in the Book of Mormon. The questions here are ones that Mormons have struggled with and debated among themselves, even apart from any disagreement between Mormons and non-Mormons as to whether the Book of Mormon is a translation at all.

6.3.5.1 Typologies of the Book of Mormon as Translation

A now-standard typology of views of the Book of Mormon as a translation was developed by Royal Skousen, whose work on Book of Mormon textual criticism has already been discussed. Skousen suggested that there are "three possible kinds of control over the dictation of the Book of Mormon text." Two of these were discussed previously: "iron-clad control," in which the scribes had to write the text correctly before Joseph could dictate any more words, and "tight control," in which Joseph saw English words that he read and in at least some instances spelled to his scribe, though both Joseph and his scribe could and did make mistakes. A third option is "loose control," in which Joseph had ideas, not words, divinely revealed to him, and which he then put into his own language (Skousen 1997, 64-65).

As Brant Gardner astutely observed, Skousen's typology says nothing about the relationship of the dictated text to the plates. The measure of "control" in the three types pertains to "the transmission of the text from Joseph to Oliver, not from the plate text to English." Indeed, as Gardner concluded, on Skousen's "tight control" model Joseph was not translating the plates at all, but was simply reading the English text he saw (Gardner 2011, 155). Gardner's concern was to determine the relationship between the English text of the Book of Mormon and the ancient text on the gold plates. He proposed a different threefold typology. (1) In *literal equivalence*, the English text provides something close to a word-for-word translation of the ancient plate text. (2) *Functional equivalence* might be characterized as a sentence-for-sentence translation that uses English words that may not be direct equivalents of the original but overall reflect the original intent. (3) *Conceptual equivalence* regards the English text as a translation only in a very loose sense, as it allows for considerable additions for which there are no corresponding words in the ancient text. Such additions may be, as Blake Ostler argued, expansions on the original in

the form of "commentary, interpretation, explanation, and clarifications" (Gardner 2011, 156, quoting Ostler 1987, 66). While allowing for the presence of some literalist and conceptual equivalence in various passages where the evidence warrants such conclusions, Gardner proposed functional equivalence as the default assumption in interpreting the Book of Mormon (Gardner 2011, 247).

6.3.5.2 Assessing the Evidence

Six categories of evidence all play a role potentially in trying to answer this question. The best explanation of the Book of Mormon as a work purporting to be a translation of an ancient text will be the one that accounts for the evidence from these six categories better than other explanations. The remainder of this section will comment briefly on each of these types of evidence.

1. ***Testimonies concerning Joseph's method***. Considerable attention has already been given to the reports of what Joseph did when he dictated the translation of the Book of Mormon. At least one element of those testimonies has been called into question even by conservative LDS scholars, namely, the claim that Joseph saw words (in or via the seer stone) that would not disappear until the scribe had written down the dictated words correctly. The textual evidence flatly disproves that claim, as Royal Skousen has rightly argued, since if it were true Joseph and his scribes would not have needed to make numerous corrections to the original manuscript. Since this part of the eyewitness accounts is known to be false, there is some basis for scepticism about other elements of their testimonies.

Furthermore, Mormons generally assume that if those who testified to seeing Joseph dictate saw him do so with his face in his hat, then this must have been the method for every part of the Book of Mormon. However, such an assumption is unwarranted. If the external evidence were to show that Joseph used an existing text in dictating the Book of Mormon, this evidence would have to be given preference to the reports of Joseph's associates.

2. ***Joseph's comments about the lost 116 pages***. As discussed earlier in this chapter, after the 116 pages of Joseph's first manuscript were lost by Martin Harris, Joseph claimed that God told him not to re-translate the same material because if he were to do so the wicked men who stole the lost pages would alter them so as to make it appear that Joseph's new translation differed verbally from his

previous version (D&C 10:31). This rationale for substituting a translation of a different group of plates presupposes that Joseph's translation was supposed to be a verbally inspired, verbally accurate text. It assumes that God gave Joseph the exact words to dictate the first time around, and that God could do so again, but that if this were to happen the thieves would doctor the original manuscript to make it appear that Joseph had failed to produce the same wording as the original. Thus, Joseph's handling of the problem caused by the lost 116 pages shows that he also claimed that the very words of his translation had been supernaturally revealed.

That Joseph made this claim does not in and of itself prove that he thought of the translation as predominantly a literalist, word-for-word rendering of the ancient text. However, such an understanding is by far the most natural (even if not the only possible) inference from Joseph's claim that the very same words would have been revealed to him in a second translation as in the first. Moreover, in his historical and cultural context this is the only defensible conclusion as to what Joseph was claiming to do. Literalist, more or less word-for-word translation is how virtually *everyone* in early nineteenth-century Anglo-American society thought of the translation of texts, especially scriptural texts, from one language to another. This is why the KJV (as well as some later versions) italicized words the translators had "added" to complete the sense of the text. Paraphrases of the Bible, dynamic equivalence translation theory, and the like were a century away. The first Bible in modern English idiom was Ferrar Fenton's *The Holy Bible in English*, begun in 1853 but not published in its entirety until fifty years later (Fenton 1903). Sophisticated literary individuals as early as Jerome understood that good translations emphasized sense over word-for-word correspondence (Nida 1993, 750), but even the Vulgate was a fairly literal translation in that regard.

The standard view in Joseph's day and culture even among well-educated Christians is exemplified in an article by Bishop Samuel Horsley, published posthumously in the same year that Joseph began working on the Book of Mormon. According to Horsley, although a translation cannot be purely "word for word," the translator properly offers a paraphrase only where there is a specific reason for doing so (S. Horsley 1828, 102-103).

The idea that "translation" might involve extensive paraphrase, wholesale rewriting, and expansion with material for which there was no corresponding text in

the original at all was simply beyond the reach of nearly everyone in Joseph Smith's culture. This means that the most natural inference from Joseph's own statements about his translation is the only plausible one: Joseph claimed that he was giving a supernaturally revealed translation that was at least predominantly a literalist, word-for-word rendering of an ancient text.

3. ***The idiom of the Book of Mormon***. The evidence of the Book of Mormon text, discussed in preceding sections of this chapter, shows that its idiom or style of language (including grammar, word choice, figures of speech, and so forth) are all consistent with the theory that it was an early nineteenth-century composition that both used and imitated the KJV. Where there are figures of speech or grammatical features that can be paralleled in ancient Hebrew, these are best explained as resulting from the influence of the KJV, which often translated the original-language texts of the Bible in a very literal fashion. The inconsistency of the Book of Mormon in its supposed exhibition of Hebraisms counts against the claim that such Hebraisms reflect the grammar of the original-language text of the gold plates.

At the same time, the frequent occurrence of language found in the Bible demonstrates that the Book of Mormon was being *presented* as a literal translation of a Bible-like ancient work. This conclusion is especially supported by the *overuse* of certain expressions found in the KJV, such as "and it came to pass," "behold," "exceeding(ly)," and "yea," which are indicative of imitation of biblical style. The LDS Church officially characterizes the Book of Mormon as a literalist translation reflecting ancient grammar and idiom in its 2013 statement on Book of Mormon translation (Intellectual Reserve 2013a). Thus, on this point the textual evidence shows that the Book of Mormon is not what Joseph Smith presented it to be and not what the LDS Church today teaches it to be.

4. ***Evidence from the original and printer's manuscripts***. An earlier section of this chapter (§6.2.4.3) reviewed Royal Skousen's arguments for the "tight control" view of Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon. Skousen argued that the manuscript evidence demonstrates that Joseph saw actual words, which he then dictated to his scribe, and that Joseph did not know ahead of time what words were coming or how they would fit into the book as a whole. The evidence adduced by Skousen does not, however, confirm that claim. Rather, it shows only that Joseph

did dictate the text of the Book of Mormon to his scribes, typically twenty to thirty words at a time, and that he spelled out unusual names for the scribe.

5. ***Joseph Smith's revisions in later editions of the Book of Mormon***. As noted briefly earlier in this chapter, Joseph oversaw second and third editions of the Book of Mormon in 1837 and 1840. The revisions in these editions obviously prove that Joseph did not consider the first printing to be without error. The thousands of grammatical and spelling changes, especially in the second edition, also reasonably show that Joseph did not consider the original (O) or printer's (P) manuscripts to be without error. If Joseph ever gave his scribes and other associates the impression that the process of translation had guaranteed a letter-perfect or even word-perfect manuscript, such an impression obviously was not consistent with the revisions he made in the second and third editions. Yet for decades afterward David Whitmer and various other associates of Joseph continued to claim that he was unable to see a new string of words until the scribe's manuscript was correct—proving beyond reasonable doubt that their recollections of the translation process are at least somewhat untrustworthy.

Some of Joseph's revisions went beyond grammar and spelling, notably his change of "God" to "the Son of God" and "the Eternal Father" to "the Son of the Eternal Father" (1 Nephi 11:18, 21; see also 1 Nephi 11:32; 13:40) in the 1837 edition and of "white" to "pure" (2 Ne. 30:6) in the 1840 edition. Since these changes do not reflect the wording of either O or P, they might seem to support the idea that Joseph regarded translation as more than simply a literalist rendering with something close to word-for-word correspondence. This inference makes the unwarranted assumption that Joseph was not purporting to correct mistakes in O and P. It is likely that Joseph was not more concerned about correcting what he realized were theologically problematic statements than he was about recovering the original wording of the Book of Mormon, but this does not mean he did not claim to have given a translation that corresponded to such an original wording.

6. ***Verbal parallels to the King James Version***. The final consideration is the fact of extensive verbal parallels between the Book of Mormon and the KJV Bible. These parallels are found in the more than two dozen chapters of Isaiah that are duplicated whole as well as the many other passages that echo various passages in the OT and the NT in the KJV. This point is so important for this study

of the use of the SM in the Book of Mormon that it will be explored in some detail later in this chapter (especially §6.5 and §6.9). As will be shown, the Book of Mormon is unquestionably dependent on the KJV—a fact for which the evidence is so strong that the conclusion should be regarded as certain.

Brant Gardner agreed. "The specifics of the KJV quite clearly influenced the formation of many sentences and paragraphs in the Book of Mormon where the plate text quite clearly could not have supported that particular translation" (Gardner 2011, 193). Referring to a Book of Mormon figure named Abinadi supposedly living in the Western Hemisphere before the time of Jesus and yet who makes a statement that "clearly depends on 1 Corinthians 15:53-54" (Mosiah 16:10), Gardner commented, "How can Abinadi quote Paul? Clearly he could not" (Gardner 2011, 194). For Gardner, the evidence of dependence on the KJV proves that at least in such places (which are numerous) the Book of Mormon cannot be a literalist type of translation (195). This much is obvious enough. The question remains whether Gardner's "functional equivalence" theory—viewing the Book of Mormon as mainly presenting a sentence-for-sentence translation—adequately accounts for the totality of the evidence of the Book of Mormon's dependence on the KJV of the Bible.

6.3.5.3 Is the Book of Mormon What It Claims to Be?

The Book of Mormon purports to be an English translation of an ancient collection of scripture texts of an unknown language written in "reformed Egyptian" characters. In assessing the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, one must make that assessment on the basis of Joseph Smith's representation as to what sort of translation he produced. The evidence clearly shows that Joseph led his family and other associates to believe that he saw English words (in the seer stone in his hat) that he simply read to his scribes. The evidence also shows that Joseph presented the Book of Mormon as a predominantly literalist, word-for-word translation of the original ancient text supposedly inscribed on the gold plates.

On the other hand, the evidence considered so far raises serious difficulties for the literalist view of the Book of Mormon as a translation. These difficulties lead a minority of Mormons, notably Brant Gardner, to argue that the translation, though divinely inspired and supernaturally revealed to Joseph Smith, was actually of a different sort. Such a conclusion in effect rejects Joseph in order to save him; that is,

it rejects his claim as to what sort of translation he was producing in order to salvage his claim that what he produced was in some sense a translation. Gardner ends up speculating, "I strongly suspect that Joseph Smith did not fully understand how he produced the translation" (Gardner 2011, 287). Yet just two pages before making that statement, Gardner had commented regarding the problem of replacing the lost 116 pages, "On some level, Joseph may have understood that he could not translate the same document twice in the same way, not because he lacked divine inspiration, but because the very nature of that inspiration produced a translation that was only a functional equivalent of the inspired meaning" (285). Gardner's difficulty in deciding how much Joseph understood about his own translation arises from the fact that any clear answer leads to trouble. If Joseph did understand what sort of translation he was producing, then he misled his associates by leading them to believe it was a literalist translation when it was not. If it was a functional-equivalence translation that drew on Joseph's own knowledge of the Bible and his experience in the revivalist culture of the early nineteenth century, then he would have to know that it did so. Hence the claim that it was not a literalist translation but that Joseph did not know that it was not is incoherent.

The LDS Church regards the translation of the Book of Mormon as a miraculous work and the very words of that translation as sacrosanct, to the point that "the Church discourages rewriting the Book of Mormon into familiar or modern English" (Intellectual Reserve 2010, §21.1.8). Yet they permit the Book of Mormon to be translated into other languages. Although it has occasionally published statements acknowledging that the translation was not originally free of grammatical and especially spelling mistakes, in general its stance on the Book of Mormon as a translation is clearly what Skousen called "tight control" and what Gardner criticized as "literalist." This is evident especially in its explicit endorsement of the claims of Tvedtnes, Skousen, and others that the Book of Mormon exhibits numerous ancient grammatical and idiomatic features (Intellectual Reserve 2013a). Since Joseph and his associates all represented the translation in a literalist way as well, the Book of Mormon's authenticity must be tested on the basis of that claim. Its authenticity cannot be cogently salvaged by constructing a revisionist model of translation in which Joseph sometimes reproduced ancient Hebraic grammar and idioms, sometimes put what the ancient text said into his own grammar and idioms, and

sometimes dictated material for which there were no corresponding sentences at all in the reformed Egyptian script.

6.4 Contexts

In the case of the Gospel of Matthew, as discussed in chapter 4, there is no significant debate about the geographical, historical, cultural, religious, and social contexts in which it was written. Virtually all biblical scholars agree that Matthew was written in the second half of the first century by a Jewish Christian living in the Eastern Mediterranean region that included Syria and Galilee. The qualification "virtually" is necessary only because a stray scholar here or there proposes that the author was a Gentile conversant with Judaism or that he wrote in some other part of the Mediterranean world or that he might have written either just before or just after the half-century window just specified.

In the case of the Book of Mormon, on the other hand, no such consensus exists about its contexts. Instead, there is a sharp divide between conservative LDS scholars who regard it as an ancient book probably written in Mesoamerica and everyone else (Mormon and non-Mormon) who view it as a nineteenth-century fiction written in upstate New York. This divide obviously affects the way the Sermon at the Temple (ST) in the Book of Mormon is viewed. This section will explain briefly some of the representative problems that call into serious question the antiquity and therefore the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

6.4.1 Geographical Contexts

The main setting of the Book of Mormon is in the Americas. In 1 Nephi 1-17, Lehi and his family leave Jerusalem and travel to southern Arabia, and in 1 Nephi 18 they sail to a new place that they call "the promised land" (1 Ne. 18:23). The rest of the Book of Mormon narrative takes place in that land. The Book of Mormon contains numerous references by name to various cities, lands, rivers, and other geographical locations understood to be located in the Western Hemisphere. None of these references uses a name known in modern times by which any of them can be found, a fact that Mormon scholars plausibly explain is the result of the fact that locations are given different names by successive civilizations (Hamblin 1993, 162-70, though his analysis might be challenged on a number of points). This means,

however, that one must find some way to orient the study of the Book of Mormon geographically to some known location.

The obvious anchor of Book of Mormon geography is the location where the gold plates were supposed found, namely, the hill near Joseph Smith's home in Manchester, New York. From very early in LDS history, Mormons have identified that hill as Cumorah, the location of the final battles recorded in the Book of Mormon in which both the Jaredite and Nephite civilizations came to an end. Oliver Cowdery, for example, described the location near the villages of Manchester and Palmyra as the place where "the entire power and national strength of both the Jaredites and Nephites were destroyed," and said that Mormon recorded the defeat of his people "as they were encamped round this hill Cumorah" (Cowdery 1835).

To this day Mormons refer to that hill near Joseph's Manchester home as Hill Cumorah. Yet even this seemingly simple place to begin mapping the Book of Mormon has been disputed by LDS scholars, who claim that Cumorah must have been in Mesoamerica, thousands of miles from where the gold plates were found. Over half a century ago Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth president of the LDS Church, dismissed this view as a "modernistic theory" contrary to "the teachings of the Church…for upwards of 100 years" (J. F. Smith 1956, 3:233). In 1990 Michael Watson, writing to a bishop on behalf of the First Presidency of the LDS Church, stated: "The Church has long maintained, as attested to by references in the writings of General Authorities, that the Hill Cumorah in western New York state is the same as referenced in the Book of Mormon" (Watson 1990).

Undaunted by the pronouncements of their own religious authorities, Mormon scholars have insisted that the identification of the hill where Joseph found the plates as Cumorah rests on a simple misreading of the Book of Mormon (e.g., Hamblin 1993, 178). They point out that Mormon stated that he "hid up in the hill Cumorah all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni" (Mormon 6:6). Thus, the plates on which the Book of Mormon were specifically not included among the plates buried by Mormon at Cumorah. The Book of Mormon contains no statement from Moroni indicating where he was going to bury the plates, or even stating explicitly his intentions to do so (cf. Moroni 10:1-2). These textual observations are accurate, and thus one may legitimately argue that the Book of Mormon does not

itself specify that the gold plates were to be buried at Cumorah. That having been said, it also does not deny that Cumorah was to be the location of their burial.

Hamblin suggested that the belief that Joseph Smith found the gold plates at Cumorah is merely an "early nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint interpretation," which he blamed on Oliver Cowdery (Hamblin 1993, 177). However, Joseph himself made at least two statements supporting this identification. He claimed that a "great prophet" named Onandagus "was known from the Hill Cumorah, or eastern sea to the Rocky mountains" (*HC* 2:79), thus indicating that Cumorah was located in America, not in Mesoamerica. More specifically, in an 1842 revelation published in the LDS scripture Doctrine & Covenants he referred to Cumorah as the place where the angel Moroni gave him the Book of Mormon: "And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfilment of the prophets—the book to be revealed" (D&C 128:20). Joseph went on to refer to other supposed modern visitations made to him and others in the same geographical area, specifically mentioning three cities in New York and Pennsylvania. Thus, in context this Mormon scripture, originating from Joseph Smith himself in his capacity as a prophet, reflects the understanding that Cumorah was the place in upstate New York where Joseph claimed to have found the gold plates. The LDS Church still teaches this view, as in the current (2013) Introduction to the Book of Mormon it states that Moroni "hid up the plates in the Hill Cumorah."

If despite this authoritative information one follows Mormon scholars like Hamblin in their view that Cumorah is not to be identified as the location where Joseph found the plates, then there is really no fixed, known location from which to orient Book of Mormon geography. The places described there might be almost anywhere on earth—at least anywhere other than the Middle East—and apparently Moroni, at the end of his life, journeyed to upstate New York to bury the plates.

Joseph Smith made a number of statements that provide at least some indication of the general area to be associated with the Book of Mormon. In his official history, Joseph reported that the angel Moroni had told him that the gold plates gave "an account of the former inhabitants of this continent" (JS-H 1:34). Webster's 1828 dictionary defined *continent* as follows: "In *geography*, a great extent of land, not disjoined or interrupted by a sea; a connected tract of land of great extent; as the Eastern and Western *continent*. It differs from an isle only in

extent" (N. Webster 1828, 1:47). The natural interpretation of the statement that Joseph attributed to Moroni is that the Book of Mormon is about the former inhabitants of the Americas or Western Hemisphere, though a reference to North America might be possible. "The former inhabitants" need not refer absolutely to every group of people on the "continent," but would need to refer minimally to a large or dominant group or groups of people there.

Other reports by Joseph of what the angel told him support this continent-wide understanding of the people of the Book of Mormon. In his journal entry for November 9-11, 1835, regarding his conversation with Robert Matthews, Joseph reported that the angel "said the Indians were the literal descendants of Abraham." In the 1842 Wentworth Letter, Joseph asserted that the angel had informed him "concerning the aboriginal inhabitants of this country" and that on the plates "were engraven an abridgement of the records of the ancient prophets that had existed on this continent." He said that in the Book of Mormon "the history of ancient America is unfolded," that they record "that America in ancient times" was inhabited by the Jaredites and then by a race of people that "were principally Israelites," and that after the fall of that second race "the remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country" (*EMD*, 1:44, 170-71). Consistent with this understanding that the American Indians were descendants of the surviving people of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith routinely referred to the Indians as "Lamanites" in his revelations published in the LDS scripture Doctrine & Covenants (D&C 28:1, 8-9, 14; 30:6; 32:1-2; 54:2, 8).

All of these statements by Joseph Smith would seem to require anyone who accepts the Book of Mormon as inspired to accept also the understanding that its narrative was set in the American "continent"—either the Western Hemisphere as a whole or perhaps just North America—and that it was concerned especially or primarily with the people who were the ancestors of the American Indians. These statements are not presented merely as Joseph's opinions, but as the word of the angel Moroni himself (one of the supposed authors of the Book of Mormon) and as some of Joseph's inspired revelations preserved in LDS scripture.

The most prominent features of the Book of Mormon's internal geographical references support a "hemispheric" model of its lands. The Book of Mormon refers to a "land northward" and a "land southward" connected by a "small neck of land," also called a "narrow neck of land" (Alma 22:30-33; 63:5; cf. Ether 10:20). The "land

southward" and the "land northward" were surrounded by four seas: the "sea south," "sea north," "sea west," and "sea east" (Hel. 3:8), though only two of these seas, those on the west and the east, appear elsewhere in the narrative (Alma 22:27, 32-33; 50:8, 11, 13; 52:11-13; 53:8, 22; 63:5; Hel. 4:7; 11:20). This information rather obviously suggests that the "land northward" is North America, the "land southward" is South America, the "small" or "narrow" neck of land is the Isthmus of Panama, the west and east seas are the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, and the less significant north and south seas are the Arctic and Antarctic (or Southern) Oceans.

The land northward is said to have been "covered with large bodies of water" (Alma 50:29; also Hel. 3:3-4). These large bodies of water were located near the hill Cumorah, where the Lamanites annihilated the Nephites, the same hill (called Ramah) where the Jaredites also lost their last battle (Mormon 6:4; Ether 15:8, 11). This description correlates extremely well with the understanding that Cumorah was the hill where Joseph Smith claimed to have found the gold plates, since he lived a mere eighteen miles from Lake Ontario, one of the Great Lakes. The land around Cumorah is described as "a land of many waters, rivers, and fountains" (Mormon 6:4), and the region in upstate New York where Joseph lived featured the famous "Finger Lakes," the Oswego, Oneida, Seneca, Clyde, and Genesee Rivers, and the marshlands lying between those lakes and Lake Ontario (where the Erie Canal was built during Joseph Smith's youth).

Mormon scholars, even those critical of the hemispheric interpretation of Book of Mormon geography such as John Sorenson, admit that it has been the popular view and that it originated from Joseph Smith himself (Wunderli 2002, 163-64). Such scholars have argued that Joseph was inspired to translate the Book of Mormon but not necessarily inspired in all of his statements *about* the Book of Mormon. However, the evidence just surveyed here makes such an explanation effectively impossible within the context of LDS faith. Joseph made many of these statements in LDS scripture (both Joseph Smith—History and several places in Doctrine & Covenants), and in some instances he attributes his information to Moroni, the supposed final author of the Book of Mormon. Assuming their historicity, if anyone would know where the Book of Mormon events took place it would be Moroni. Thus, attempts to characterize Joseph Smith's views about Book of Mormon geography as not authoritative for Mormons appear to be indefensible.

The many statements in the Book of Mormon pertaining to geographical matters pose something of a conundrum. Sorenson has estimated that the Book of Mormon contains "some 600 statements" of potential geographical significance (J. Sorenson 2013, 119). That is a surprisingly large number of such statements in a book containing numerous sermons, visions, lengthy quotations from the OT, and other didactic texts. Yet despite the plethora of supposed information regarding lakes, rivers, seas, cities, distances and directions travelled, and the like, Mormons themselves have never come to a consensus as to the New World physical locations of the Book of Mormon. It is also puzzling that so much information of this type would be included in religious texts. For whose benefit did Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni include all of these statements? Only two explanations seem promising. Either these statements were made by ancient authors so that modern readers could find the locations of critical Nephite events, or they were made by Joseph Smith to give the narrative verisimilitude, by making it seem as though the events had occurred in real places. The former explanation founders, however, if no plausible correlation of Book of Mormon geography can be made with the real world, leaving the latter explanation as more likely.

The dominant view of Book of Mormon geography among LDS scholars is that the lands where the Jaredites, Lamanites, and Nephites lived were located in Mesoamerica. The term *Mesoamerica* is a modern technical term designating (roughly) the pre-Hispanic cultures of the geographical region the exact extent of which is variably defined but that includes most of Mexico and Central America (on the use of the term see Creamer 1987). Generally speaking, Mesoamerica is understood to include most of Mexico (excluding some of the northern parts of the country), all of Belize, Guatemala, and El Salvador, the westernmost part of Honduras, and the Pacific coastal region of Nicaragua and of northern Costa Rica (R. Adams 2005, 12-17; Nichols and Pool 2012, 1-2). Sorenson, in particular, has devoted a great deal of effort to defending his specific "limited geography" model of the Book of Mormon in several publications over many years (cf. J. Sorenson 1985, 1990, 2000), including his magnum opus, *Mormon's Codex* (2013). His scholarship has been compendious and sophisticated, and it has apparently convinced most though not all Mormon scholars working in Book of Mormon studies.

Beyond the problem of reconciling his model with Joseph Smith's revelatory statements on the matter, Sorenson's model suffers from some basic problems that appear to be beyond resolution. One such problem is that his model simply cannot account for the four seas referenced in Helaman 3:8. Mesoamerica is bounded by the Pacific Ocean on one side and by the Atlantic Ocean on the other. The Atlantic Ocean waters bordering Mesoamerica can be divided into at most two seas, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea (separated by the Yucatan Peninsula). There simply is no other body of water that can account for the fourth sea, and even a third sea requires a strained correlation. Sorenson simply ignored the question, offering no correlation at all to the seas north and south, and consistently presenting maps that supposedly reflect the internal evidence of the Book of Mormon but that fail to include those two seas (e.g., J. Sorenson 2013, Maps 1 and 3). Brant Gardner, who generally followed Sorenson's geographic model, argued that the references to the four seas in Helaman 3:8 should not be read as literal geographical locations but as "a literary image expanding the idea of the 'whole face of the earth'" (Gardner 2007, 5:65). Joseph Allen and Blake Allen also struggled with the problem, suggesting that Helaman 3:8 "should be read as more of a generalized statement as opposed to a specific geographical statement," and in particular "the two seas in the Book of Mormon called 'sea south' and 'sea north' provide general directions" (Allen and Allen 2011, 634). Neither Gardner nor the Allens have successfully explained why references to literal bodies of water would be mixed with "literary" or "general" language about two additional seas that do not literally exist.

A related difficulty is the orientation of the lands and seas in Sorenson's model, which restricts the Book of Mormon lands to central Mesoamerica in and around the Isthmus of Tehantepec. The general orientation of the areas to either side of this isthmus lies along an east-west axis, making it problematic to designate them as the lands southward and northward. Even more puzzling, Sorenson identified the sea west as the Pacific Ocean, specifically the Gulf of Tehuantepec, and the sea east as the Gulf of Mexico, more specifically the Gulf of Campeche (J. Sorenson 2013, 22, 712). Yet the Gulf of Mexico is *directly* north of the Gulf of Campeche. This problem simply cannot plausibly be solved by the hypothesis that Book of Mormon cardinal directions lay at an angle to the conventional ones. The Allens differed from Sorenson in part on this issue. They identified the sea west as

the Pacific Ocean but the sea east as the Caribbean; the Gulf of Mexico does not correspond to any of the four seas mentioned in Helaman 3:8 (Allen and Allen 2011, 628-37). While the Allens were critical of the shift in the cardinal directions in Sorenson's model (391), their model also placed the lands "northward" and "southward" essentially west and east of each other (see, e.g., map on 431).

Another difficulty for these views is the identification of the "small neck" or "narrow neck" of land as the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The Book of Mormon states that "it was only the distance of a day and a half's journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea," across the "small neck of land between the land northward and the land southward" (Alma 22:32). According to Sorenson, the total distance across the isthmus at its narrowest is about 118 miles, from which he subtracted some distance to take into account the lagoon on the Pacific side, bringing the effective distance close to a hundred miles. To explain how a Nephite could cover a hundred miles in 36 hours, Sorenson theorized the journey could have been covered partly by boat or that the text could be referring to a series of runners relaying messages from one post to the next (J. Sorenson 2013, 122-23). These suggestions are both *ad hoc* and ignore the fact that the terrain would lengthen the actual distance travelled. For example, a journey by boat on the Coatzacalcos River from one end to the other would actually be 202 miles (325 kilometers), requiring roughly forty hours and traversing only about half of the isthmus. Wunderli pointed out that the modern highway across the narrowest part of the isthmus is 187 miles long (Wunderli 2013, 264).

Sorenson and other LDS scholars have produced a massive amount of research attempting to substantiate a real-world geographical setting for the Book of Mormon. Yet these efforts have ignored the authoritative statements of Joseph Smith on the subject, strained to account for some of the most basic geographical descriptions in the Book of Mormon, and failed to win a consensus among Mormons as to the general area where its peoples lived. It is reasonable to conclude that the lack of a clear geographical setting for the Book of Mormon calls into serious question its historical authenticity. The numerous place names, descriptions of terrain, and specifications of directions and times of movements appear to have been part of the narrative fiction created by the book's modern author. Whereas most ancient authors of historical texts—such as Matthew, as was discussed earlier

in this study (§4.4)—make no show of geography but demonstrate on close inspection to be referring to real places, the author of the Book of Mormon seems to be trying a little too hard and ends up with nothing concrete to show for his efforts.

6.4.2 Historical Contexts

The Book of Mormon tells of two successive civilizations. The first was that of a pre-Israelite people commonly called the Jaredites who lived in the New World from about the third millennium BC to about 570 BC. The second was that of Israelite peoples known as the Nephites and Lamanites from about 600 BC until about AD 421, beyond which its culture continued in some ways with the Lamanites. The high point of the narrative is the appearance of Christ to the Nephites sometime shortly after his resurrection (ca. AD 34), when the Book of Mormon presents Jesus preaching the Sermon at the Temple (ST) to the Nephites. The question of the historical authenticity of the ST is naturally an issue within the larger question of the historicity of the Book of Mormon narrative as a whole.

Mormon scholars and apologists commonly correlate the two Book of Mormon civilizations with two civilizations of ancient Mesoamerica: the Olmecs and the Maya. According to Joseph and Blake Allen, the Jaredites "developed a massive New World civilization" in the region identified as the Olmec heartland and during the same period (ca. 2600-300 BC); in effect, the Jaredites were the pre-Olmecs and the Olmecs (Allen and Allen 2011, 11, 69). Likewise, they statde, "In essence, both the Nephites and the Lamanites were Maya—distinguished only by their allegiances and by where they lived" (7). More specifically, the Mayans of the Preclassic period (600 BC-AD 200) were Nephites and those of the Classic period (beginning about AD 200 or 250) were Lamanites (51). The Allens offered some heavy qualifications of these identifications, to which this study will return below.

John Sorenson has been somewhat more cautious than the Allens and avoided treating these correlations with the Olmec and Maya civilizations as identifications. That is, he did not identify the Jaredites as the Olmecs or the Nephites as the Maya, but rather argued that the Book of Mormon peoples were in some way *part* of the history of those Mesoamerican peoples. With regard to the Jaredites, Sorenson asserted, "The society and culture of Ether's record disappeared at essentially the same time that the archaeological record witnesses

the end of the widespread cultural remnants of Olmec civilization (except for La Venta). This constitutes a correspondence of considerable power" (J. Sorenson 2013, 527). Sorenson also argued that the history of the Israelite peoples in the New World (the Nephites, Lamanites, and Mulekites) can be correlated with the late pre-Classic civilization that during the Classic era became the cultures of the Maya and Zapotec peoples in Mesoamerica (144-49). Brant Gardner was even more cautious. For example, while he agreed that "the Jaredites participated in the Olmec world," he denied "that the Jaredites were the Olmec," commenting, "There is no evidence for that assertion" (Gardner 2007, 6:147 n. 1).

The approach that will be taken in this section is to provide an overview of the Book of Mormon narrative of its peoples alongside an overview of the history of the Mesoamerican region as generally understood in contemporary scholarship. These overviews will be the basis for a preliminary assessment of the plausibility of the "correlations" that Sorenson and other LDS scholars have made in support of the historicity of the Book of Mormon narrative.

6.4.2.1 The Jaredites and the Olmecs

The Book of Ether in the Book of Mormon purports to be Moroni's condensed version of an account written by a prophet in the early sixth century BC named Ether. According to the book, the families of Jared, his brother, and some friends of theirs were spared from the "confounding" of languages at the Tower of Babel (Ether 1:33-37, cf. Gen. 11:1-9) and promised by the Lord to be led to "a land which is choice above all the lands of the earth" (1:42). This land was one that "the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people," a "land of promise" where "whatsoever people shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven" if they serve Jesus Christ (Ether 2:7-12). The people built barges and sailed across the seas for 344 days, finally arriving at "the promised land" (6:11-12).

The Book of Ether mentions no other inhabitants of the land alongside the Jaredites during their history. This silence, of course, is not sufficient grounds for drawing the conclusion that no other peoples were present. However, four considerations show that the people of Jared are understood to be the original and only inhabitants of this "land of promise" during their history.

1. They represent the first generation of human beings to travel there from Babel (Ether 1:33-43). The Book of Mormon presupposes the traditional understanding of Genesis that all human beings were living in the region in and around the Middle East at the time of the tower (Ether 1:33).

2. Even before the Jaredites reach the New World, they travel through a wilderness "where there never had man been" (2:5).

3. The Jaredites are the specific "people" or "nation" whom the Lord granted to "possess" the land of promise (Ether 2:8-12).

4. When the Lord judged the Jaredites by bringing on them "utter destruction," the land would not simply remain populated by other peoples already there; instead, "the Lord God would send or bring forth another people to possess the land, by his power, after the manner by which he brought their fathers" (11:20-21). The last clause of Ether 11:21 clearly means that the people who would possess the land after the Jaredites were to arrive there by transoceanic journey just as the Jaredites had.

Before Jared and his brother died, one of Jared's sons agreed to be king over the people, beginning a dynastic kingdom spanning more than 28 generations (1:7-32). Many of the kings in this dynastic history were overthrown and forced into exile or captivity by rebellious sons or former allies, but the dynasty survived until the seventh-century BC king Coriantor was overthrown by Coriantumr. By the third generation of the dynasty at least one city had been built (Nehor, 7:9), and in the seventh generation the king Coriantum built "many mighty cities" (9:23), a prominent feature of Jaredite civilization (10:4-12, 18). That civilization fell as the result of the conspiracies of "secret combinations" in the form of a "secret society" (11:7, 15, 22; 13:15, 18; 14:8-10; cf. 8:18-25). Over two million warriors died, along with their women and children, in the final wars during the reign of Coriantumr in the early sixth century BC, the last man to survive of the Jaredite civilization (15:2, 23-32).

The end of the Jaredite civilization is clearly indicated by the Book of Mormon narrative as taking place in the early sixth century BC, since it records that the people of Zarahemla (whom Mormons commonly call Mulekites) met Coriantumr, the last surviving Jaredite, soon after their arrival in the New World (Omni 1:21-22). The Jaredites' history in the New World begins shortly after the Tower of Babel, an event that neither the Bible nor the Book of Mormon dates. The *latest* possible date for the

Tower of Babel would be about 2200 BC, a date often accepted in older LDS references. In John Sorenson's most recent study, he dated the arrival of Jared and his party in the New World about 2800 BC and their final battle about 570 BC (J. Sorenson 2013, 27, 31). Within this chronological framework, the first Jaredite cities would have appeared by the mid-third millennium (ca. 2500 BC, give or take a century or so), and the Jaredites would have built many large cities by about the beginning of the second millennium (ca. 2000 BC).

Brant Gardner's commentary presented a highly revisionist chronology that dated Jared to the 1100s BC and that rejected the connection between Jared and the Tower of Babel as an unhistorical retelling of the story by the Nephite king Mosiah (Gardner 2007, 6:148, 150, 154). Gardner also revised the end of the Jaredite kingdom to ca. 200 BC, arguing that the people of Zarahemla had lived in their land for nearly four centuries before encountering Coriantumr (6:147-48). This alternate chronology has the merit of making the Jaredites' rise and fall more closely parallel that of the Olmecs (though, since Gardner denied equating the two, how much was thereby gained is unclear). On the other hand, this proposal not only forfeits the historical reliability of the Book of Ether but it also requires the Jaredites and the Mulekites to have coexisted in the region for four centuries without any contact, a highly implausible claim especially given Gardner's adherence to the limited Mesoamerican geographical model of the Book of Mormon lands.

The findings of modern science and archaeology demonstrate the need to recalibrate traditional views about the chronology of the early events in Genesis but do not undermine their historicity. While no archaeological remains of the Tower of Babel described in Genesis 11 have yet been found, recent discoveries have pushed back the origin of temple buildings many thousands of years earlier than many scholars thought possible just two decades ago. Currently the oldest man-made structure in the world thought to be a temple is Göbekli Tepe, a site in southeastern Turkey dating from at least 9000 BC and perhaps as far back as 11,000 BC (Curry 2008; Schmidt 2010; Mann 2011), though the site has also been explained as consisting of houses with religious symbolism (Banning 2011). A recent study has suggested that the human languages of Eurasia evolved from a common ancestral language originating in the vicinity of the Middle East roughly 13,000 BC (Pagel, Atkinson, Calude, and Meade 2013; see also Ghose 2013). The authors

noted a plausible link "the near concomitant spread of the language families that comprise this group to the retreat of glaciers in Eurasia at the end of the last ice age" (Pagel, Atkinson, Calude, and Meade 2013, 8474). These recent studies provide some admittedly tentative support for the conclusion that Genesis was correct in claiming that human languages diversified from an original language in the Middle East, but some ten thousand or more years before the time of the Jaredites by any current LDS reading of the Book of Mormon.

If the time scale was the only issue one might argue for recalibrating Book of Mormon chronology in a manner comparable to the recalibration of biblical chronology favoured here, but other issues render such a project moot. Archaeologists, anthropologists, and other scholars are in broad agreement that the Western Hemisphere was originally populated by people from the eastern regions of Asia who crossed a land bridge connecting Siberia and Alaska known as Beringia (where the Bering Strait is now) more than ten thousand years ago. A 2012 review of the *status quaestionis* cited numerous archaeological studies dating various sites and artifacts throughout the Western Hemisphere going back to about 11,500 BC (Ochoa 2012). Thus, the archaeological and anthropological evidence demonstrates that the Americas became populated by Asiatics crossing the Bering Strait roughly fourteen thousand years ago as human beings spread out in all directions about the time their languages also began to diverge. While no one can prove definitively that transoceanic journeys were impossible during that era, such an explanation is neither plausible nor consistent with the evidence.

Civilization emerged gradually in Mesoamerica beginning between three to four thousand years ago, with the earliest definable culture or civilization being that of the Olmecs. The term *Olmec* refers to a type of art and architecture but also by extension to the "archaeological culture," that is, the people or peoples who created and perpetuated the artistic and architectural remains of that culture, uses of the term that are controversial and potentially confusing (Grove 2001b, 405, 408). The emergence of Olmec culture may be dated to about 1500. The Olmecs made their definite appearance in the Gulf Coast area that includes Veracruz. Their emergence is marked by the first stone monuments in Mesoamerica, all in and around San Lorenzo, La Venta, and Laguna de los Cerros, most famously by the sixteen

colossal heads made from basalt and thought to represent Olmec rulers (Grove 2001a, 2:239).

Excavations at San Lorenzo identified three phases of Olmec archaeological history there from about 1150 to 500 BC as well as three "pre-Olmec" phases from 1500 to 1150 BC. The part of the Olmec city at La Venta dubbed Complex A by Mesoamerican archaeologists was contemporaneous with the last Olmec phase at San Lorenzo (ca. 700-500 BC). La Venta had been occupied since about 1700 BC and began to flourish as a city around 900 BC (Grove 2001b, 406).

In the history of Olmec studies numerous theories have been proposed regarding their origins. "Olmec art and culture have been attributed to seafaring Africans, Egyptians, Nubians, Phoenicians, Atlanteans, Japanese, Chinese, and other ancient wanderers" (Diehl 2004, 13), not to mention Mormon efforts to trace their origins to Mesopotamians. Such theories "faded quickly when the San Lorenzo excavations unearthed a lengthy pre-Olmec archaeological record which demonstrates that the Olmec evolved in situ there…. Their achievements were theirs, not borrowed from others near or far" (Grove 2001b, 407). Most scholars of Mesoamerican studies agree with this assessment (e.g., Cyphers 2001b, 121; Diehl 2004, 14). Mormon anthropologist Brant Gardner also agreed: "There is no indication of either a biological or cultural infusion from the Middle East. The Olmec culture is native to Mesoamerican soil" (Gardner 2007, 6:142).

The demise of the Olmecs remains something of a mystery. David Grove commented on this question: "There are no data to indicate whether the decline of the major Olmec centers and the disappearance of the defining artifact complex was rapid or gradual. The Late Preclassic monuments at Tres Zapotes strongly suggest that over time, the Olmec simply evolved out of the traits by which they were originally defined" (Grove 2001b, 408). Traces of Olmec culture remained at Tres Zapotes until about the first century BC (N. Hunt 2001, 31).

The Book of Mormon narrative concerning the Jaredite civilization simply does not fit the evidence concerning the Olmec civilization. Setting aside Gardner's highly revisionist interpretation that involves rejecting the historicity of key elements of the Jaredite narrative, a number of critical mismatches between the Jaredites and the Olmecs may be noted in summary. (1) The Jaredites are represented in the Book of Mormon as the original settlers of the New World; the Olmecs were one of

many indigenous peoples in Mesoamerica with a prehistory there of many thousands of years. (2) The Jaredites are represented as settling in the New World about 3000-2200 BC and building many great cities by about 2000 BC, whereas the Olmec culture did not clearly emerge until about 1150 BC and its cities about 900 BC, a disparity of about a millennium. (3) The Jaredites annihilated each other by the millions around the beginning of the sixth century BC; the Olmec population dropped rapidly in part of their heartland in the fourth century BC but continued elsewhere, notably Tres Zapotes, for another two or three centuries.

Mormon scholars attempt to have it both ways—to claim significant correlations between the Jaredites and the Olmecs while denying any need to identify the Jaredites as the Olmecs—but this can only be done at the cost of undermining the historical coherence of the Book of Mormon. As has been explained, the Book of Mormon clearly presents the Jaredites as the original inhabitants of the land and as possessing the land until their self-annihilation and the arrival of the Israelite migrations in the sixth century BC. The Book of Ether claims that the Jaredites established a bloodline dynasty that survived for at least 28 generations, despite frequent periods of exile or captivity, and that it was the Jaredite rulers who led the way in building up their civilization with its cities, industries, wealth, and military strength (see especially Ether 9:21-10:27). If the Jaredites lived in the Tehuantepec region during the first millennium BC, then, they must have *been* the Olmecs, not just a small subculture blending into Olmec society. Yet they cannot be identified as the Olmecs, as scholars such as Sorenson and Gardner admit. The most likely conclusion by far, therefore, is that the Jaredites simply did not exist.

6.4.2.2 The Lehites and the Maya

Most of the Book of Mormon narrative concerns peoples descended from two groups of Israelites who left Jerusalem and travelled across the oceans to the Western Hemisphere in the early sixth century BC. The first and dominant group was that of Lehi and his family, including his sons Nephi and Laman, from whom the peoples called the Nephites and Lamanites derived. The second group was a party of Israelites associated with Mulek who also sailed to the Americas in a separate voyage roughly around the same time as the Lehite party. The people of Mulek

(whom Mormons often call Mulekites) lived in a land called Zarahemla, and around the second century BC they met and united with the Nephites, essentially becoming absorbed into Nephite society.

6.4.2.2.1 Lehites as the Dominant if Not Sole Inhabitants of the Land

As explained in the discussion above concerning the Jaredites, the Book of Mormon represents the land to which all these peoples journeyed as a "land of promise" that had been occupied and possessed by the Jaredites until they massacred one another about the beginning of the sixth century BC, with only one Jaredite surviving when the new settlers arrived from Jerusalem. Very early in the Book of Mormon, Nephi is told that God has "prepared" this land for them (1 Ne. 2:20) and anticipates that they will not merely dwell in the land but will "obtain" it (7:13). When Lehi and his party arrive in the "promised land," they occupy the land, begin planting crops, and find game for hunting, animals suitable for domestication, and all kinds of precious metals (18:23-25)—but apparently they did not find other people. The land was "choice above all other lands" and was "covenanted" by the Lord to Lehi for his descendants and for others—not others already living there, but others "who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord" (2 Ne. 1:5). It was God's wise intention "that this land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations; for behold, many nations would overrun the land, that there would be no place for an inheritance" (1:8). If Lehi's descendants remained righteous, God promised that they would "be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves" (1:9). This passage in 2 Nephi 1 is especially clear on the matter: the Israelites who had arrived in the land of promise were to possess it to the exclusion of all other nations, whom God would keep from even knowing about the land, *unless* the Israelites became wicked. Thus the Israelites who occupied the land were to be the only people living there unless they turned their backs on God.

The conclusion that the Book of Mormon represents the Lehites (along with the Mulekites, another group of Israelites that later become part of the same people) as the primary if not the sole inhabitants of the land leads to two serious difficulties, one internal and the other external. The internal difficulty is a cluster of problems pertaining to the population growth of the Lehites, since the Book of Mormon represents them as becoming a large nation within two generations. The external

difficulty is another cluster of problems with regard to correlating the Lehites with any people of the Americas during the millennium (ca. 600 BC-AD 400) in question, even if that people is limited to a small area within Mesoamerica. To resolve these problems John Sorenson argued that the land must have already been inhabited by large numbers of people when Lehi's party arrived (J. Sorenson 1997, 65-104). However, Sorenson strained to accommodate the Book of Mormon text to this hypothesis. For example, he argued that 2 Nephi 1 must be referring to other nations "close at hand" while the Lehites were living there because the arrival of Europeans in the sixteenth century is too late (71-73). But the vagueness of his phrase "close at hand" masks the real problem, which is that on Sorenson's view "other nations" *co-existed with the Lehites in the same land and even overshadowed them culturally throughout their history*. There is no room for this idea in 2 Nephi 1 or the rest of the Book of Mormon. The "other nations" there must refer to *invaders* who displace the unbelieving descendants of Lehi and break up their civilization. This is why, as Sorenson admitted, most Mormons have understood 2 Nephi 1 to be referring to the European conquests of the Americas, a view Sorenson dismissed as exhibiting "limited imagination" (72).

Book of Mormon scholars today universally recognize that the traditional view that the Nephites and the Lamanites were the only peoples or nations in the land simply cannot be defended as historically, anthropologically, or culturally plausible. Among the many reasons why the traditional view cannot be sustained is the genetic evidence that Native American peoples are Asiatic, not Middle Eastern, in origin. When scientists and scholars brought this evidence forward in criticism of the Book of Mormon (Murphy 2002; Southerton 2004; Groat 2004), Mormon scholars generally responded either by questioning the validity of the science, by denying that the Book of Mormon claims that Jews were ever a significant segment of the population of ancient Native American peoples, or some combination or variation of these two answers (see especially Meldrum and Stephens 2007; Peterson ed. 2008; Perego 2011).

Even apart from the DNA problem, the traditional view that the Nephites and Lamanites were the only people inhabiting the Book of Mormon lands will not work even in the limited Tehuantepec model, let alone the hemispheric model that all Mormon scholars have abandoned. It is essential to a defence of the Book of

Mormon's historical plausibility to maintain not only that the Nephites and Lamanites lived among other peoples but that those other peoples represented the dominant culture of the land throughout Book of Mormon history. Yet throughout the lengthy Nephite historical narrative there is not a single clear reference to such other peoples. Brant Gardner admitted, "All evidence for people already living in the 'land of promise' comes from inference, not direct evidence" (Gardner 2007, 1:352). No such inferences are necessary when reading the Bible, which is full of references to Egyptians, Canaanites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, and other non-Israelite peoples. By contrast, the Book of Mormon contains no references (by any names) to the Olmecs, the Mayans, or any other such peoples. Since the inferences are weak, the best explanation for the absence of explicit references to other peoples is that the traditional understanding of the Book of Mormon better reflects what it actually says—even though this fact creates an insuperable problem for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

6.4.2.2.2 The Rise and Fall of the Nephite Civilization

The main narrative arc of the Book of Mormon concerns the rise and fall of the Nephite civilization. As the Nephites and Lamanites became two separate, usually warring peoples, they grew apart culturally. The Nephites were for the most part (until the very end) the civilized people, while the Lamanites were comparatively a savage race. Less than two centuries after Lehi's party had arrived in the land, the Lamanites had become "wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, full of idolatry and filthiness"; they lived in tents and their men went about almost naked and with their heads shaved; they were hunters and often ate game meat raw (Enos 1:20; see also Mosiah 9:12; 10:8, 12; 11:6-7; Alma 3:5; 17:14; 43:20; 3 Ne. 4:7; Mormon 5:15). This description corresponds quite obviously to early white American stereotypes concerning the Indians (Vogel 1986, 53-67). The Nephites, on the other hand, were farmers and ranchers (Enos 1:21), and as time passed their culture advanced in metalworking, architecture, technology, textiles, and armaments (Jarom 1:8; Mosiah 11:9-10; Alma 1:29; 4:6). By the first century BC, Nephite civilization was covering the land in all directions with large cities and villages (Mosiah 27:6; Helaman 3:8-11), though many of the cities were destroyed by war and natural disasters in the first century AD before Christ's coming (3 Ne. 8:5-17). The Nephites

also had a continuous tradition of prophets who preached to the people and prophesied of the coming of Jesus Christ (by name) throughout the six centuries following Lehi.

The high water mark of the Book of Mormon narrative is the appearance of Jesus Christ to the Nephites shortly after his resurrection and ascension (ca. AD 34). The Sermon at the Temple, which is the focus of this study, is a significant part of what the Book of Mormon reports Jesus preaching to the Nephites in this context (3 Ne. 12-14, see 3 Ne. 11-27). Jesus preached, appointed twelve apostles, and gave instructions for the establishment and ministry of the church. Within two years, "the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites" (4 Ne. 1:2). The people had no more contentions, no class divisions, no poverty or oppression (1:2-3). Cities were rebuilt, peace and prosperity flowed, and there was no crime anywhere in the land (1:7-8, 16-17). A kind of voluntary Christian socialism prevailed for about two centuries (1:24-26).

About AD 200, the unity, love, and goodness of the people began to unravel as a result of pride. The Nephite—Lamanite divide returned, and by the end of the third century the Nephites had become as bad as the Lamanites (1:45). Early in the fourth century war broke out between the Nephites and the Lamanites (Mormon 1:8). The war produced untold suffering, carnage, and death, and the Lamanites burned whole towns and cities (Mormon 5). It led to the decimation of the Nephite nation by about AD 385 (Mormon 6) and eventually to the complete annihilation of the Nephite people in the early fifth century (Mormon 8). About a century after the war had begun, the last living Nephite, Moroni the son of Mormon, finished the record of the Book of Mormon (ca. 421). The high "civilization" of the Nephite culture had degenerated and finally disappeared (Moroni 9:11-13). What remained was the uncivilized race of the Lamanites, "a dark, a filthy, and a loathsome people" (Mormon 5:15), who would continue to occupy the land until other nations (i.e., the European colonists and conquerors) arrived.

6.4.2.2.3 The Rise and Fall of the Classic Maya

The Maya were the dominant people and culture of Mesoamerica, specifically in the region that is now southeastern Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize, during the Book of Mormon era of the Nephites. In order for the Book of Mormon to have any

historical, cultural plausibility, some sort of correlation must be made between the Nephites and the Maya. This led Joseph and Blake Allen, for example, to argue that the Lamanites and the Nephites "were basically the same people as those whom archaeologists refer to as the Late Preclassic and Early Classic Maya" (Allen and Allen 2011, 135). Immediately, however, the Allens found it necessary to make heavy qualifications to this identification. They admitted that the Lehites were not "Maya by blood" but suggested that "their descendants became part of the larger Maya culture" (135). On the other hand, the Allens denied "that the Nephites were an insignificant speck on the Mesoamerica map" (142). They suggested that Nephites, though a minority, were the main record keepers (142).

Sorenson avoided any direct identification of the Nephites or Lamanites with the Maya. While he argued that the sequence of the Olmec culture followed by the Maya culture corresponds to the sequence in the Book of Mormon of the Jaredite culture followed by the Nephite culture, he expressed this correlation "in broad terms" so as to avoid direct identification. The history of the Nephites and Lamanites "parallels remarkably well" the history of the Mesoamerican tradition that emerged with the Olmec decline, a tradition that "can be seen in the Late Pre-Classic, which, when fully developed, became the later cultures that we know under regional labels like *Maya*, *Zapotec*, *Teotihuacán*, and so on" (J. Sorenson 2013, 149).

As has already been explained, the effort to have a Nephite—Maya correlation without the Nephites being at least the dominant cultural force simply will not fit the Book of Mormon narrative. Beyond this point, the evidence shows a serious mismatch between the fortunes of the Nephites and the Mayans. The Nephites' "golden age" came in the first two centuries AD, when in effect the entire society was Christian and when peace and prosperity reigned undisturbed. The society then fell into two centuries of division and war, with the Nephite civilization in decline by about AD 250 and gone by about AD 385, leaving uncivilized Lamanite savages in the land until the coming of the Europeans over a millennium later.

Right about the time the Book of Mormon claims that Nephite civilization began to fall apart, the Maya civilization was entering its "golden age." Mayan culture had been developing and becoming more complex, stratified, and technologically advanced throughout the period commonly called the Preclassic (ca. 300 BC-AD 250), so it would be a mistake to draw too sharp a contrast between the culture of

the periods before and after the mid-third century AD. Nevertheless, it was in the Classic period (ca. AD 250-800) that Mayan civilization flourished and reached its cultural heights. In the early part of this era, such fabled Mayan centers as Palenque, Copán, and Tikal became major political centres that one might call city-states (Chase and Chase 2012, 260-61). "The Late Classic period (550-800 AD) in the southern lowlands represented the height of Maya artistic expression…. This was also the time of the greatest population density in the southern lowlands…. Maya cities also gained their greatest areal extent in the Late Classic" (261-63). The Classic Maya civilization underwent a process of collapse taking about 150 years, probably due to a complex set of factors that may have included drought, warfare, environmental degradation, and perhaps more. By the early 900s much of the area was largely depopulated. Nevertheless, the Maya people survived—"there are still seven million Maya speakers in Mesoamerica" (D. Webster 2012, 331). The rise and fall of other parts of Mesoamerica, such as the Zapotec and Teotihuacan cultures in Mexico, roughly paralleled that of the Maya (see Elson 2012; Sugiyama 2012).

As the Allens admitted, "Clearly, the golden age of the Nephites is not the same as the Classic civilization of the Maya." Their explanation was that the Nephite golden age was such in a "spiritual" sense, whereas the Classic Maya age is a "physical" designation defined in terms of "the size and number of their buildings" (Allen and Allen 2011, 161). This explanation overlooks the sharp contrast that the Book of Mormon consistently draws between the Nephites and the Lamanites. The Nephites were farmers, ranchers, city-builders, artisans, writers, engineers, and creators of culture; the Lamanites were uncivilized savages, running around half-naked, lazy, hunters, murderous, burning cities to the ground, and destroyers of culture. Once the Nephites were gone the Lamanites turned on themselves in "one continual round of murder and bloodshed" (Mormon 8:8). The Book of Mormon clearly and loudly links civilized culture to godly faith and the lack of such culture to godlessness and wickedness. It is simply not possible to correlate its picture of the collapse of Nephite civilization at the end of the fourth century AD with the historical reality that civilization in the Maya culture and in most other parts of Mesoamerica were in fullest bloom from the third through at least the sixth centuries.

6.4.3 Cultural-Religious Contexts

Numerous issues pertaining to the cultural plausibility of the Book of Mormon have been discussed by both critics and defenders. These include animals and grains, metals and technology, cities and building materials, and the like. However, just one category of cultural context will be considered here, that of religion, because of its direct relevance to the Sermon at the Temple in the Book of Mormon. The question that will be asked here is whether the religious elements of the Book of Mormon fit better the cultural context of ancient Mesoamerica (where Mormon scholars place its peoples) or early modern America (where Joseph Smith lived).

6.4.3.1 Sources for Mesoamerican Religion

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, knowledge of Mesoamerican religion was limited largely to what could be learned from the *Popol Vuh*, a sixteenth-century Spanish text based on an earlier, lost Quiché Maya text, and a few late medieval codices that had survived the Spanish conquerors' destruction of texts deemed pagan and a very few other sources. However, new archaeological finds and advances in the interpretation of both texts and art throughout the twentieth century yielded an increasing wealth of information about Mesoamerican beliefs from much earlier periods. In the 1970s and 1980s scholars became able to read ancient Mayan texts (see Coe 2012). In 2001 murals dating from the first century BC were discovered at San Bartolo, a site in Guatemala, that depict the creation mythology of the Maya. Through these and other discoveries, scholars have been able to learn a great deal about Mesoamerican religion not only of the Classic Mayan culture (ca. AD 250-900) but extending back into the time of the Olmecs and early Mayans (Taube 2012, 742-43).

6.4.3.2 Mesoamerican Polytheism and Book of Mormon Monotheism

Mesoamerica was a thoroughly polytheistic culture from the beginnings of its complex societal development in the second millennium BC until the time of the Spanish conquest led by Cortés in the early sixteenth century AD. The basic motifs of religion and mythology show a high degree of continuity throughout Mesoamerican history. One creation myth describes the earth and the sky as being formed when gods dismember a primordial, cosmic crocodile; the myth is known from Aztec and

Maya sources and has been "traced back to the fifth century BC" at Kaminaljuyú (Taube 2012, 744), a site at present-day Guatemama City that John Sorenson argues was the city of Nephi or Lehi-Nephi in the Book of Mormon (J. Sorenson 2013, 22, 44, 131-32). An earlier version of this same motif is attested in a sarcophagus from the eighth or seventh century BC found at La Venta and called by scholars the Olmec Dragon (Reilly 2012, 768-69).

The principal deities and mythology of Mesoamerica were "fundamentally agricultural, relating to the annual planting and harvest cycle of maize, the Maya staff of life" (Coe 2011, 67). The gods were especially associated with maize, the sun, the earth, fire (especially lightning), and rain. The ancient fire deity Huehueteotl "can be traced to at least the first century BC in central Mexico and even earlier in Middle Formative Olmec sculpture" (Taube 2012, 745). The *Popol Vuh* begins with a creation myth in which the gods, after making the earth, succeed in making man on the fourth attempt using maize after failed experiments produced various animals including monkeys descended from man-like creatures made from wood (Tedlock 2001, 21-22). Central Mexico, the Zapotec, and the Maya cultures all had rain gods that can be traced historically back to devotion to the rain god in Olmec religion (Taube 2012, 747-48). All of the gods of Mesoamerican religion were depicted in vivid iconography, typically as animals, in representations that would be deemed idols in the biblical perspective.

The Book of Mormon contains few references to idolatry and even fewer references to belief in multiple gods. Six of the references to idols are found in the lengthy quotations from Isaiah (1 Ne. 20:5; 2 Ne. 12:8, 18, 20; 20:10, 11 = Isa. 48:5; 2:8, 18, 20; 10:10, 11). Another is purely rhetorical, part of a speech warning against violations of the Ten Commandments (2 Ne. 9:37, cf. 9:34-36, 38). Despite the fact that Mesoamerican culture in the sixth century BC was thoroughly polytheistic and idolatrous, there is not a single warning to Lehi's family of the unacceptable religious beliefs and practices of the prevailing culture. Of course, this silence is consistent with the fact (established in the preceding section) that the Book of Mormon presupposes that the land was essentially uninhabited when Lehi's family arrived. A similarly rhetorical, passing reference to the worship of idols occurs in Alma 7:6, in a statement that appears to be dependent on the NT: "I trust that you do not worship idols, but that ye do worship the true and the living God" (cf. 1 Thess. 1:9 KJV, "how

ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God"). The rhetorical nature of these references to idolatry is confirmed by a later passage in which Gentiles in the distant future (i.e., European settlers in early America) are exhorted to repent of their idolatry and other acts of wickedness (3 Ne. 30:2).

The Book of Mormon does contain reports of actual idolatry, mostly among the Lamanites. By the late fifth century BC they had become savages, "full of idolatry and filthiness" (Enos 1:20). Likewise, the Lamanites in the first century BC were for a time "a hardened and ferocious people" as well as "an indolent people, many of whom did worship idols" (Alma 17:14, 15). Individual Nephites were not immune from idolatry, falling into it when they rebelled (Mosiah 27:8; Alma 1:32; 50:21). At one point righteous Lamanites were preaching to the Nephites, who had temporarily fallen into all kinds of wickedness and even "did build up unto themselves idols of their gold and their silver" (Helaman 6:31). In these passages idolatry appears as the consequence of temporary periods of apostasy and wickedness, not as reflecting the prevailing religious culture.

Nothing more is said about such idolatry until near the end of the Book of Mormon narrative, where the wicked Lamanites in the late fourth century AD had become so thoroughly evil that they took Nephite women and children as prisoners "and did offer them up as sacrifices unto their idol gods" (4 Ne. 1:14, see also 1:15, 21; Mormon 5:15). This statement in 4 Nephi 1:14 is the only Book of Mormon reference explicitly to belief in or worship of "gods" (though cf. Helaman 9:41).

By contrast to the near silence regarding polytheism in the Book of Mormon, there are some 243 references to "gods" in the OT, nearly all of them in reference to the worship of false gods, and 119 explicit references to idols and idolatry. Since the culture of ancient Mesoamerica was just as polytheistic and idolatrous as ancient Canaan, one would expect a comparable level of attention to those religious errors in the Book of Mormon. Yet this is not the case.

6.4.3.3 Human Sacrificial Rituals

Most Mesoamerican peoples practiced "autosacrifice" or "ritual bloodletting," ritual acts of cutting the skin on one's body at such body parts as one's ears and private parts in order to let out blood as an offering to the gods. This was one of the dominant features of Mesoamerican ritual throughout most of the history of its

complex cultures (Gossen 2001, 31-34). "Ritual bloodletting was probably being practiced by 1200 to 1000 B.C., because at that time we start to find shark's teeth, obsidian blades, and stingray spines discarded bear public buildings in Mesoamerica's earliest villages" (Marcus 2001, 81-82). There is archaeological evidence for such bloodletting rituals in the sixth and fifth centuries BC at San José Mogote (a Zapotec site) and in an Olmec tomb at La Venta. The practice continued throughout most of Mesoamerica down to the time of the Spanish conquest. Heart sacrifice was also practiced from about 600 BC until the Spanish prohibited it in the sixteenth century (Marcus 2001, 82). Cannibalism was also widespread in Mesoamerica, though just how far back in time the practice originated is unknown. "Splintered bones found in refuse deposits in the Preclassic Olmec site of San Lorenzo, Veracruz (c. 1200-900 BCE) suggest cannibalistic practices, and similar bone deposits have appeared at Teotihuacan in the Valley of Mexico (c. 600-400 BCE)" (Read 2001, 138). The practice probably was an extension of the bloodletting and human sacrificial rituals that were prevalent in much Mesoamerican religion (138-39).

As noted above, the Book of Mormon records that the Lamanites in the late fourth century AD had become so degenerate that they sacrificed Nephite women and children to their "idol gods" (4 Ne. 1:14). It also states that toward the end of the final war in the early fifth century AD, Nephite women and children were forced by their Lamanite captors to eat the flesh of their dead husbands and fathers, while Lamanite women prisoners were raped, tortured, and eaten by Nephite soldiers (Moroni 9:8-10). Sorenson attempted to correlate these statements with the human sacrifices and cannibalism of ancient Mesoamericans (J. Sorenson 2013, 487-88, 686-87). However, the correlation fails because in the Book of Mormon human sacrifice and cannibalism are extreme signs of degradation in a war that ended the Nephite civilization, whereas in Mesoamerica these practices were widespread for a millennium or longer prior to the fifth century AD and for another millennium afterward as conventional ritual elements of the prevailing culture.

There is no reference to ritual bloodletting in the Book of Mormon. Sorenson argued for an implicit reference to the practice in the statement, "Now there is not any man that can sacrifice his own blood which will atone for the sins of another" (Alma 34:11, cited in J. Sorenson 2013, 488). However, Alma 34:11 is explaining

why one mere human's sacrificial death cannot atone for another person's sins; for example, if one man commits murder his brother cannot die in his place, but the murderer must die for his crime (34:11b-12a), and this is why the Son of God was going to come to offer an infinite atonement (34:12b-15). Ritual bloodletting is simply not part of the picture here.

6.4.3.4 Christ and Quetzalcoatl

Perhaps the best-known and most popular correlation between the Book of Mormon and ancient Mesoamerica is the claim that the Mesoamerican deity Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent, bore some relationship to Jesus Christ. The correlation was advanced by LDS Church President John Taylor in the nineteenth century (John Taylor 1882, 201), developed in detail by Milton Hunter in the mid-twentieth century (Hunter 1959), and remains a significant element of Book of Mormon apologetics today (see especially W. Hunt 1993; O'Brien 1997; Wirth 2002; Hemmingway and Hemmingway 2004; Allen and Allen 2011, 309-331; J. Sorenson 2013, 468-78, 657-72). Sorenson's argument, since it is the most recent and most academically sophisticated, will be considered here.

Sorenson's argument for "correspondences" between Quetzalcoatl and Christ focused on five "parallels." (1) The Feathered Serpent cult appears at about the right time in the archaeological record as "a fully developed iconography and architectural tradition" at Teotihuacán about the middle of the second century AD (J. Sorenson 2013, 474-75). (2) The iconographic symbolic representation of the deity as a serpent parallels the use of the bronze serpent on an elevated pole in the OT (Num. 21:8; 2 Kings 18:4) and used in the Book of Mormon as a representation of Christ (2 Ne. 25:20, 24; Hel. 8:14). Sorenson theorized that this OT iconographic tradition was the source of "flying-serpent images in Mesoamerica during the late centuries before Christ" (J. Sorenson 2013, 476). (3) Quetzalcoatl, like Christ, was represented both as a man and as the creator god (476-77). (4) "Quetzalcoatl was seen as a beneficent deity associated with natural forces (rain and fertility)" (477). (5) "Quetzalcoatl taught a set of moral ideals toward which his followers were expected to strive" (477). Sorenson mentioned other parallels commonly cited by Mormons, notably the description of Quetzalcoatl as "a white, bearded man," but acknowledged

that this and other features are attested too late to be reliable elements of any correlation with Christ (477-78).

Sorenson concluded that the correspondences between Quetzalcoatl and Christ, "while not wholly decisive, are clear enough to substantiate the argument that the content of the Book of Mormon reflects a Mesoamerican origin" (J. Sorenson 2013, 478). However, unless the correspondences demonstrate some actual connection between Quetzalcoatl and Christ, they do nothing to support a Mesoamerican origin of the Book of Mormon. Apart from some historical connection, the correspondences amount to accidental parallels of the type that one might find between any two historically unrelated religious figures, nothing more.

Sorenson's fourth "parallel" typifies the root of the problem with the comparison. While Christ is of course "a beneficit deity," he is not associated particularly with rain and is certainly not associated with fertility! The so-called parallels work only if one systematically screens out everything that does not fit—a method that begs the question. The highly selective parallels that "work" are too vague to be informative (the deity as beneficent or, as in Sorenson's fifth parallel, requiring moral conduct), while a straightforward comparison that leaves nothing out finds more dissimilarities and contrasts than anything else.

LDS anthropologist Brant Gardner has critiqued the Quetzalcoatl–Christ argument in a commendable, lengthy excursus in his Book of Mormon commentary (Gardner 2007, 5:353-95). Gardner explained that the comparisons "are parallel because they have been made to look parallel, not because they really are" (355). He cited the instructive example of the sixteenth-century scholar Bernardino de Sahagún, who described Quetzalcoatl to his readers as "another Hercules"—not because there was any historical connection between the two mythological beings, but because it can be helpful to compare the unfamiliar to the familiar.

Two facts about the Quetzalcoatl mythical texts and iconographic records need to be taken fully into account in assessing their possible relevance to the Book of Mormon Christ. The first is that all of the texts were post-Conquest compositions explaining Mesoamerican beliefs in terms meant to be both understood and appreciated by the Spanish conquerors. This resulted in some "Christianization" of pagan stories including stories about Quetzalcoatl (Gardner 2007, 5:359-61). The second is that there were different figures named Quetzalcoatl. Gardner identified

three such figures: Ehecatl Quetzalcoatl, a heavenly deity; Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl, a mortal king who ruled in Tula (in Mexico) roughly around AD 1000, and Ce Acatl Quetzalcoatl, an earthly deity (361).

Sorenson's correlation of Christ with Quetzalcoatl rested heavily on his argument for a chronological correlation with the appearance of a Quetzalcoatl cult in the Temple of the Feathered Serpent at Teotihuacán in the mid-second century AD. However, the iconography of the Feathered Serpent predated that temple by about a thousand years (Gardner 2007, 5:364-65). The origins of this iconographic tradition probably go back to the Olmecs, as seen for example in Monument 19 at La Venta (Baldwin 1998, xi, 17; H. Nicholson 2001, 397). This means that the depiction of the deity as a serpent cannot be connected historically to the bronze serpent in the OT, since if the Book of Mormon is taken at face value that knowledge would have been taken to the New World by Lehi and his party (Gardner 2007, 5:365-66).

All religions exhibit some similarities with one another. Any developed religion will include some sort of account of the origins of the world, some explanation of the relationship between humans and whatever supernatural powers are thought to exist, and some beliefs and rituals connected to sustaining human life in the midst of various threats. Mesoamerican traditions regarding Quetzalcoatl go back perhaps three thousand years, and in that time it would be surprising if elements of the related myths and legends did not include some parallels to the biblical accounts about Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, as Gardner rightly concluded, the myths concerning the heavenly deity Quetzalcoatl were at bottom pagan stories (Gardner 2007, 5:371).

According to the Book of Mormon, Christianity held sway in pristine, undiluted form throughout the land of the Nephites for two centuries, a golden age of peace and prosperity. Yet there is no credible evidence of Christian religion in the considerable archaeological remains from that period throughout Mesoamerica. Instead, the archaeological evidence shows that the religious mythologies, symbols, and rituals of the period were in continuity with those of Mesoamericans for centuries beforehand and afterward. Those expressions of religion were pervasively polytheistic and pagan from the earliest development of complex culture a thousand years before Christ and right up to the time of the Spanish conquest. The religious

character of ancient Mesoamerican civilization poses one of the most severe obstacles to locating the Book of Mormon narrative in that historical setting.

6.4.3.5 Early Nineteenth-Century Religious Context of the Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon gives no attention whatsoever to the religious beliefs and practices of any non-Israelite peoples with whom the Nephites and Lamanites might have come into contact. It does, however, give substantial attention to religious issues that happened to be matters of public, popular debate in Joseph Smith's day. Thus, one finds the following positions articulated by the Nephite prophets:

- Confusion about what the Bible teaches is the result of many plain and precious things being lost or removed from the Bible, which resulted in widespread apostasy in Christianity (1 Nephi 13:20-40).

- The belief that the canon of Scripture is closed and that the Bible is complete wrongly keeps people from being ready to accept new revelations and new Scripture (2 Nephi 29).

- Everyone must be baptized to be saved (2 Nephi 9:23-24). Many Christians in Joseph Smith's day, as today, believed that baptism is required or essential for salvation. If this is so, how were people saved before Christ came? The Book of Mormon answers this question by reporting that people were required to be baptized for salvation even before the coming of Christ (see also 2 Ne. 31:4-12; Mosiah 18:10-17; 26:4, 22; Alma 4:4-5; 5:62; 6:2; 15:12-14; 32:16; Hel. 16:1-5; 3 Ne. 7:24-26).

- Believers on earth before the time of Jesus were saved through faith in Jesus Christ, because the prophets spoke explicitly about Jesus by name (e.g., 2 Nephi 25:13-20). This teaching addressed the theological question prevalent in Joseph Smith's day (and still today) as to how people were saved before Christ's coming in the flesh.

- The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God (2 Nephi 31:21; Mormon 7:7). Against Unitarianism, the Book of Mormon stoutly affirms the doctrine of the Trinity, though arguably not always in a theologically consistent manner.

- The wearing of "costly apparel" is represented as a dangerous indulgence of pride of great concern throughout Nephite history (Jacob 2:13; Alma 1:6, 27,

32; 4:6; 5:53; 31:28; Hel. 13:28; 4 Ne. 1:24; Mormon 8:36-37). Evangelical preachers such as John Wesley likewise often railed against costly apparel, citing NT texts such as 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3-4 (e.g., Wesley 1760, 149-58).

- The Book of Mormon rejects the practice of a paid clergy (2 Ne. 26:29-31; Mosiah 27:5; Alma 30:32-35).

- The Zoramites are portrayed as proclaiming from a high pulpit that God "hast elected us to be thy holy children," saving them while damning everyone else to hell, and thanking God for doing so—and they are said to be consumed with pursuing riches and to be extremely proud (Alma 31:15-18, 24-25). This passage clearly reflects common caricatures of the religion and beliefs of Presbyterians, the denomination favoured by Joseph Smith's mother, and the denomination of which Joseph was most critical (Matzo 2013). The Zoramites are also portrayed as teaching that God "would be a spirit forever" and "that there shall be no Christ," which of course is very unlike the Presbyterians—lest Joseph's readers too easily accuse him of writing that denomination into his ancient book. Elsewhere the Book of Mormon offers additional criticisms of Calvinist beliefs, as in its caricatured criticism of the idea that Christ died specifically to save the elect (2 Ne. 26:24-28).

- The doctrine that all people will be redeemed and have eternal life (a popular belief in Joseph Smith's day known as *universalism*, accepted by some of his relatives) is also repudiated as a false doctrine (e.g., Alma 1:4). At the same time, the Book of Mormon holds out hope for salvation of those who through no fault of their own were ignorant of the gospel (Mosiah 15:24).

- Another false doctrine given attention is atheism, represented by a figure named Korihor, who mouths typical arguments of scepticism (Alma 30). Scepticism and atheism were serious problems in Joseph Smith's society, but they are unlikely to have existed in ancient Mesoamerica (or anywhere else in the ancient Americas).

- There is an intermediate state between death and resurrection in which righteous spirits are happy in paradise and the wicked are in outer darkness (Alma 40).

- America as a land of freedom is a fulfillment of prophecy (3 Nephi 21).

- God revealed the gospel in ancient times in both hemispheres, even sending Jesus to the Nephites to preach the gospel to them (3 Nephi 11-27). This doctrine addressed the very common question in Joseph Smith's day: Why would God reveal himself only to people of the Old World? The Book of Mormon asserts that God also revealed himself to the ancestors of the Indians.

- A church should not be known by the name of any man except Christ (3 Ne. 27:7-8). This statement is easily understood as a criticism of Christians being known as Lutherans, Calvinists, Wesleyans, and the like.

- The time of miracles and revelations is not past (Mormon 9).

- Infants should not be baptized (Moroni 8:4-26). English and American Protestants of different denominations vigorously debated infant baptism in Joseph Smith's day, as they do even somewhat today.

The directness with which the Book of Mormon so frequently addresses modern Christians and their concerns (or objections) shows that it is a modern book addressing modern issues. Mormon leaders have occasionally admitted the modern focus of the Book of Mormon even while claiming it was written in ancient times. LDS President Ezra Taft Benson famously explained that "the Book of Mormon…was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. Mormon wrote near the end of the Nephite civilization" (Benson 1988, 58). According to Benson, "The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon is similar to the type we have today. God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat false educational, political, religious, and philosophical concepts of our time" (56). Todd Christofferson, citing Benson in agreement, similarly stated that the Book of Mormon authors, "acting under inspiration, wrote what would be of greatest benefit to us in these latter days" (Christofferson 2011). Likewise, Mormon scholar Robert Millet has quoted Benson's statements as validating the view that "the Book of Mormon is an ancient book which exposes modem falsehoods and modem anti-Christs" (Millet 1990, 189). Benson cited statements from various Book of Mormon authors testifying that they "wrote for future generations" (2 Ne. 25:21; Jacob 1:3; Enos 1:15-16; Jarom 1:2; Mormon 7:1).

"Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing" (Mormon 8:34–35).

The theological explanation that the Book of Mormon addresses modern issues because God inspired the Nephite prophets to write for the benefit of modern believers is unsatisfactory, for at least two reasons. First, it is suspiciously *ad hoc*. While it would certainly be possible for God to inspire prophets to address theological, pastoral, and cultural issues that would not become relevant until many centuries later, this does not seem to be the most likely explanation for the modern-oriented content of the Book of Mormon. The explanation that Joseph Smith used the Book of Mormon as a vehicle for addressing those issues fits the facts without being *ad hoc*. Second and most telling, the modern issues that the Book of Mormon addresses are those specifically that were of live interest in early nineteenth-century Anglo-American culture. The Book of Mormon does *not* address the burning issues that have dominated Christianity since the publication of the Book of Mormon, such as higher criticism of the Bible, the theory of evolution, liberal theology, Communism and other forms of totalitarianism, religious pluralism, the New Age movement, feminism, abortion, or homosexuality.

Finally, it should be noted that the Book of Mormon not only reflects the religious concerns specific to Joseph Smith's place and time, but it addresses those concerns in a manner typical or characteristic of evangelical Protestant piety in Joseph's culture. Since helpful studies of this phenomenon have already been published (e.g., M. Thomas 1983; Palmer 2002, 95-133), one clear example will be given here. Alma's supposedly first-century BC sermon in Alma 5 reads very much like the sorts of off-the-cuff exhortatory sermons that the Methodists and other revivalists were giving in the Great Awakening—adapted to the Book of Mormon's chronological setting of the first century BC. The sermon uses frequent rhetorical questions, pressing the hearers to examine their spiritual condition to determine if they have been "born again" (5:14, cf. 5:49), if they truly have faith (5:15), and so on. It uses intertwining biblical allusions throughout, seemingly without effort, and drawing especially on the New Testament (e.g., Alma 5:15, cf. 1 Cor. 15:42, 53-54; 2 Cor. 5:10; Alma 5:52, cf. Matt. 3:10). It contains urgent warnings to escape hell (Alma 5:6-10) and be "saved" (5:9, 10, 13, 20, 21, 31). It warns that the hearer could

die at any moment and be unprepared to face God in judgment (5:27-31). The sermon even ends with an "invitation" to come and be baptized (5:62).

The utter disconnect between the religious milieu of ancient Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon on the one hand, and the clear, numerous, and distinctive connections between the religious milieu of Joseph Smith's culture and the Book of Mormon on the other hand, constitute an extremely strong basis for viewing the Book of Mormon as a nineteenth-century composition.

6.5 Use of the Old Testament

As has already been noted more than once, perhaps the most notorious feature of the Book of Mormon is its extensive quotations from the Bible, mostly from the Book of Isaiah. The use of Isaiah and other OT texts is of obvious relevance in an assessment of the appearance of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount in the Book of Mormon, the focus of this study.

6.5.1 Old Testament in the Book of Mormon: An Overview

Nearly one-third of the Book of Isaiah—21 of its 66 chapters—appears in the Book of Mormon. This material may be analysed into three groups, each of which is used in different ways:

- All of Isaiah 2-14 appears continuously as a whole and with very little change in wording in 2 Nephi 12-24. According to the Book of Mormon, this material was all inserted into the text of the gold plates by the prophet Nephi (2 Ne. 11:2, 8; 25:1).
- All but the first two verses of Isaiah 29 appears in 2 Nephi 26-27, heavily edited and interpolated (2 Ne. 26:15-18; 27:2-9, 15-19, 25-35).
- All of Isaiah 48:1-55:2 except for 52:4-5 appears scattered in three different parts of the Book of Mormon, with very little change in wording: (a) in recitations by Nephi (1 Ne. 20-21) and his brother Jacob (2 Ne. 6:6-7, 16-18; 7-8; 9:50-51) shortly after their arrival in the new land; (b) in Abinadi's preaching (Mosiah 12:21-24; 14; 15:14-18, 29-31); and (c) in Jesus' teaching of the Nephites (3 Ne. 20:32, 34-45; 22).

Two other full chapters of the OT are quoted in the Book of Mormon, specifically Malachi 3-4, which Jesus is reported as quoting for the Nephites shortly

after quoting Isaiah 52 and 54 (3 Ne. 24-25). Thus, the Book of Mormon includes full quotations of 23 chapters of the OT. In addition, Abinadi is reported as quoting the Ten Commandments (Mosiah 12:34-36; 13:12-24; cf. Exod. 20:1-17).

All of the biblical chapters quoted in the Book of Mormon in full or in large measure cluster in three places:

1. Lehi's sons Nephi and Jacob quote 18 chapters of Isaiah in full along with many other quotations from the Bible in 1 Nephi 20—2 Nephi 30. This section of 33 chapters that are mostly biblical quotations and comments on those quotations accounts for about half of the material said to have been translated from the Small Plates of Nephi (1 Nephi through Omni).

2. Abinadi quotes all of Isaiah 53 in Mosiah 14. He also quotes the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:1-17) in his preaching in Mosiah 12-13, and he comments on select verses in Isaiah 52-53 in Mosiah 15.

3. Jesus repeats the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) and quotes Isaiah 52 and 54 as well as Malachi 3-4 in his appearances to the Nephites (3 Ne. 12-14, 20, 22, 24-25). This material constitutes a large amount of the account of Jesus' time with the Nephites (3 Ne. 11-28).

6.5.2 Framing the Issue of the Bible in the Book of Mormon

The inclusion of so much material from the Bible, especially about one-third of Isaiah, in the Book of Mormon has been regarded ever since its first publication as *prima facie* evidence of its modern origin. Critics of the Book of Mormon have commonly argued that Joseph Smith (or his source) incorporated the biblical material using the KJV. The case for this conclusion is extremely strong, as shall be explained below. However, the issue needs to be clarified in view of some common objections brought by Mormons against this criticism of the Book of Mormon.

First of all, it is not technically accurate to describe the Book of Mormon's use of biblical material as *plagiarism*. Although the precise definition of the term plagiarism is a matter of some continuing discussion, it is generally used in reference to unacknowledged or uncredited use of another's material in which a false, misleading claim to originality is stated or implied (e.g., Posner 2007, 106). By this definition the Book of Mormon's extensive use of Isaiah and other books of the

Bible is not plagiarism because the Book of Mormon generally states explicitly that it is quoting those biblical texts—particularly the whole chapters.

Second, the issue is not simply a matter of the use of earlier material. Most biblical scholars think that at least one of the Synoptic Gospels was a source for one or both of the others; as was argued in chapter 4, it is very likely that Matthew and Luke both made use of the Gospel of Mark. This is not plagiarism; nor is it objectionable or somehow evidence against the authenticity of Matthew and Luke. Perhaps more immediately relevant is the fact that 2 Kings 18:13-20:19 and Isaiah 36:1-38:8; 39:1-8 closely parallel each other, a fact that on a conservative view of Isaiah is explained by the use of Isaiah 36-39 by the author(s) of 2 Kings (see Payne 1963). The OT historical narrative work that runs from Joshua through 2 Kings does not incorporate extensive prophetic visions or messages from Isaiah (as does the Book of Mormon) but instead utilizes the historical narrative in Isaiah 36-39 as a natural source. In any case, this example does show that the Book of Mormon's use of Isaiah cannot be faulted merely by the *a priori* assumption that any use of an earlier scriptural text would be out of place in a later one.

Third, it need not be denied that the biblical chapters reproduced in the Book of Mormon are generally integrated into its narrative in a meaningful way. LDS scholars have devoted a great deal of effort to showing in particular that the Isaiah chapters form an integral part of the teachings of the Nephite prophets who are reported as quoting them in the Book of Mormon (most notably Parry and Welch ed. 1998). The extent to which the integration is successful is a worthy topic in its own right but will not be pursued here.

The issue is simply this: whether the inclusion of the extensive biblical materials in the Book of Mormon is best explained as reflecting an ancient or a modern origin of the Book of Mormon. In what follows, compelling evidence will be presented showing that Joseph Smith, not ancient Nephite prophets, was responsible for incorporating the material into the Book of Mormon.

6.5.3 Quantity of Old Testament Material in the Book of Mormon

The sheer quantity of OT material quoted or repeated in the Book of Mormon is a serious problem for the view that this material was incorporated into the text on the gold plates by their ancient authors. Again, the Book of Mormon incorporates 23

full chapters from OT books, in addition to other extensive quotations. As there are 239 chapters in the Book of Mormon, this means that about one-tenth of the Book of Mormon chapters consist of quotations from the OT. Somewhat more precisely, the Book of Mormon includes at least 515 verses from the OT (not counting very brief allusions) out of a total of 6,603 verses in the Book of Mormon, or almost one-twelfth (8%). On its face, this fact is in and of itself suspicious, and there are specific considerations that give objective grounds for judging the volume of OT quotations in the Book of Mormon to be highly implausible in its purported ancient composition.

First, the Nephites already had a permanent record of the OT writings available to them in the "plates of brass" that Lehi's family took with them to the New World (1 Ne. 5:10-13, 18-19; 19:21-22; 2 Ne. 4:2, 15; Mosiah 28:11, 20; Alma 37:3-5; 3 Ne. 1:2). These plates of brass would have included Isaiah, the Ten Commandments, and other OT texts quoted in the Book of Mormon.

Second, the Book of Mormon contains numerous comments about the necessity of passing over a great deal of relevant information due to the lack of writing space and the difficulty of writing on the plates. Astonishingly, the Book of Mormon make such statements in more than forty separate places (1 Ne. 1:16; 6:1, 3, 5; 8:30; 9:1; 10:15; 14:30; 17:6; 19:3, 6; 2 Ne. 4:14; 5:4; 11:1; 31:1; 33:1, 3; Jacob 1:2; 3:13; 4:1-2; 7:27; Jarom 1:1-2, 14; Omni 1:4, 9; Words of Mormon 1:5-6; Mosiah 1:8; 8:1; Alma 8:1, 3; 9:34; 11:46; 13:31; Helaman 3:14; 5:13; 14:1; 3 Ne. 5:8, 18; 7:17; 26:6; Mormon 8:5, 23; 9:33; Ether 1:3-5; 3:17; 12:24-25, 40; 15:33). Several of these comments appear in the immediate context of the lengthy quotations from the OT in 1 Nephi 20-21 and 2 Nephi 7-8 and 12-30 (1 Ne. 19:3, 6; 2 Ne. 5:4; 11:1; 31:1). Since Isaiah was already on the plates of brass and writing space on the gold plates was at such a premium, why use up so much of that writing space repeating a third of the book of Isaiah?

These two factors, taken together, raise serious doubts about the plausibility of the ancient Book of Mormon authors incorporating large portions of Isaiah into the record of their gold plates.

6.5.4 Placement of Old Testament Chapters in the Book of Mormon

OT chapters do not appear at random in the Book of Mormon. All but one of those chapters are clustered in two parts of the Book of Mormon. Their placement

provides a clear explanation for why they were incorporated into the text and confirms that this was done by the Book of Mormon's modern author.

The first cluster of whole OT chapters comes in the narrative section that runs from 1 Nephi 20 through 2 Nephi 30. These chapters account for about half of the material in the "small plates of Nephi" material from 1 Nephi through Omni. Of these 33 chapters, 18 are wholly chapters from Isaiah while between six and nine more chapters are largely quotations and comments on Isaiah.

No reason specific to the supposed ancient historical situation accounts for so much of the "small plates" reproducing material from the "plates of brass." No plausible reason can be given for Nephi copying a fifth of Isaiah (chapters 2-14) when no comment is made about most of that material. Brant Gardner offered two comments on the matter, neither of which is satisfactory. First, citing 1 Nephi 19:23-23, he says that "Nephi believed that Isaiah was directly relevant to his people" (Gardner 2007, 2:199). The passage Gardner cited might be acceptable as an explanation for Nephi referring or quoting briefly from Isaiah, but not for the lengthy excerpts filling up so much of the limited writing space on the plates. Gardner also suggested that the lengths of the excerpts were dictated by the textual units of Isaiah and by Nephi's practice of "quoting a unit rather than just the specific words on his particular point, thus always appearing to quote more than a modern speaker would" (2:202). This proposed explanation is falsified by the fact that Nephi uses several short quotations as well (e.g., 2 Ne. 6:14, quoting Isa. 11:11; 2 Ne. 9:50-51, quoting Isa. 55:1-2; 2 Ne. 30:9, 11-15, quoting Isa. 11:4-9).

On the other hand, a plausible reason for this concentration of Isaianic material here comes from the modern history of Joseph Smith's dictation of the Book of Mormon. After the loss of the 116 pages, Joseph knew he could not re-dictate the same text as had been lost, so he announced that God had revealed that another, somewhat parallel account had been written on another group of plates that he was to translate instead (see above, §6.2.3). Since this parallel account necessarily had to be skimpy on narrative details that might conflict with the lost pages, should they ever turn up, Joseph filled the new account with supposed visions and prophecies of Lehi and his sons (1 Ne. 8, 10-15; 2 Ne. 1-4, 31-33; Jacob 4-6) alongside lengthy quotations from and expositions of Isaiah (1 Ne. 20-21; 2 Ne. 6-9, 11-24, 27-30).

The other cluster of whole OT chapters in the Book of Mormon is found in the account of Jesus' appearances to the Nephites following his resurrection. In this context Jesus quoted for the Nephites most of Isaiah 52 (3 Ne. 16:18-20; 20:32, 34-45), all of Isaiah 54 (3 Ne. 22), and about half of the Book of Malachi (3 Ne. 24-25). These OT chapters are only part of the biblical material that is presented as part of Jesus' teaching to the Nephites. According to 3 Nephi, Jesus quoted the entire Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-7:27, see 3 Ne. 12:3-14:27), the focus of this present study. All told, Jesus quotes nearly seven full chapters of the Bible (four from the OT, three from Matthew) in the 18 chapters narrating his visitations to the Nephites (3 Ne. 11-28). Much of the remaining material consists of comments by Jesus on those biblical texts and pastiches of sayings of Jesus from the Gospels.

Here again, a plausible modern explanation for this textual phenomenon is available: rather than creating whole new discourses of Jesus, Joseph Smith may well have thought it better, even safer, to have Jesus repeat things he had said to the Jews and to quote and expound the OT Scriptures. On the other hand, it is simply not plausible that Jesus would give lengthy quotations from Isaiah as well as Malachi (a book the Nephites had never known). One reason this is not plausible is that it does not fit with Jesus' practice as presented in the Gospels, where Jesus' quotations from the OT never exceed two verses (Matt. 13:14-15; 21:42 par.; Luke 4:18-19).

The placement of the whole OT chapters in the Book of Mormon, then, is better explained on the hypothesis that they were incorporated into the narrative by the modern author Joseph Smith.

6.5.5 Divisions of the Isaiah Texts

One argument that Mormon scholars have given for viewing the inclusion of the Isaianic material in the Book of Mormon as the work of its ancient authors concerns the places in Isaiah where the quotations begin and end. Modern chapter and verse divisions, of course, were not part of the ancient text, and as LDS scholar John Gee correctly noted these modern divisions "can be a subtle impediment to understanding the scriptures" (Gee 1998a, 68). Gee therefore sought to show that the Book of Mormon's quotations from Isaiah reflect the internal, ancient divisions of the text and not the chapter and verse divisions that were familiar to Joseph Smith.

Gee explained the Book of Mormon's lengthiest quotation, Isaiah 2-14 (in 2 Ne. 12-24) as Nephi's deliberate selection of two sections of Isaiah: one that deals with Jerusalem or Zion in Isaiah 2-12 and the other that deals with Babylon in Isaiah 13-14 (Gee 1998b, 73). This explanation is seriously weakened by the fact that the passage about Babylon is the beginning of a whole new lengthy section of Isaiah announcing divine judgments on the nations surrounding Judah. Each of these announcements is introduced with the formula "the burden of" (KJV; "an oracle of," ESV) followed by the location facing judgment: Babylon (13:1), Moab (15:1), Damascus (17:1), Egypt (19:1), the wilderness of the sea (21:1), Dumah (21:11), Arabia (21:13), the valley of vision (22:1), Tyre (23:1), and the beasts of the south (30:6). Thus Isaiah 13-35, or at least Isaiah 13-23, comprises a new section distinct from Isaiah 1-12 (or 2-12). Gee tried to overcome this evidence by arguing that the use of the formula "that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw" in Isaiah 2:1 and 13:1 show that the messages to Jerusalem and Babylon should "be grouped together" (Gee 1998b, 72). However, by this reasoning Isaiah 1 (which begins with the same formula) should be grouped with Isaiah 2-14, yet Nephi's lengthy quotation begins with Isaiah 2, not Isaiah 1. Rather than grouping Isaiah 13-14 with Isaiah 2-12, the repeated formula "that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw" marks Isaiah 13:1 as the beginning of a new major section of the book, as virtually all exegetes agree.

The most egregious error in the chapter-length OT quotations in the Book of Mormon is its quotation of Isaiah 53 in Mosiah 14. John Welch, in an essay on the passage, commented that "some scholars have wondered whether the song of the suffering servant should begin at Isaiah 53:1 or 52:13," citing two scholars in support of each view (Welch 1998, 293). This seemingly even-handed comment does not reflect the actual state of scholarly opinion on the matter, which overwhelmingly identifies the pericope as beginning at 52:13. Ronald Bergey's statement in 1997, published the year before Welch's essay, was true then and still is today: "The vast majority of scholars, since B. Duhm in 1892, designate the literary unit 52:13–53:12 as the fourth servant song" (Bergey 1997, 177 n. 1). Already in the sixteenth century John Calvin recognized the chapter division as a serious mistake: "This division, or rather dismemberment, of the chapter, ought to be disregarded; for it ought to have begun with the thirteenth verse of the former chapter, and these words ought to be connected with what goes before" (Calvin 1853, 4:111).

The evidence for regarding Isaiah 52:13-53:12 as a literary unit may be summarized briefly. The subject of the entire passage is "my servant" (*'abdî*), referred to as such by Yahweh in the first and last parts of the passage (52:13; 53:11; these are the only two occurrences of the expression in Isaiah after 49:6). The subject of the singular third-person verbs throughout chapter 53 presuppose that their subject has already been identified, and that subject grammatically must be Yahweh's servant mentioned in 52:13 (Goldingay and Payne 2006, 2:275). The references to the servant's humble appearance in both 52:14 and 53:2 and to his exaltation in 52:13 and 53:11 link 52:13-15 thematically with chapter 53. The passage appears to have been composed as a chiasmus or some similar concentric structure (see, with variations, Motyer 1993, 423; Ceresko 1994; Bergey 1997, 179; Goldingay and Payne 2006, 2:277; An 2010, 92-94; Averbeck 2012, 56-57):

   A. "My servant" will be exalted and sprinkle many nations (52:13-15)
　　 B. To whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed? (53:1)
　　　 C. He was despised and forsaken (53:2-3)
　　　　 D. He suffered for us (53:4-6)
　　　 C'. He was oppressed and afflicted (53:7-9)
　　 B'. By the hand of Yahweh his purpose will be fulfilled (53:10-11b)
   A'. "My servant" will be great and will bear the sins of many (53:11c-12)

There is an irony here: John Welch has repeatedly argued that one of the indications of the antiquity of the Book of Mormon is its use of chiasmus (Welch 1969, 2007, et. al.). Yet here, where the Book of Mormon quotes a famous passage in the OT composed as a chiasmus, the Book of Mormon disrupts the chiastic structure by omitting the first part of the passage. By far the most plausible, if not the only plausible, explanation for this fact is that the author of Mosiah was misled by the modern chapter division—which points to Joseph Smith as the author, not the translator, of the book of Mosiah.

6.5.6 Dependence on the King James Version

It is perhaps the best known fact about the Book of Mormon that its lengthy quotations of the OT generally follow the wording of the KJV very closely. Before

considering the significance of this phenomenon, the facts need to be stated objectively and with some precision.

The focus of this section is specifically on quotations, not paraphrases or allusions, of the OT in the Book of Mormon. More narrowly, the focus here is on quotations that correspond fairly closely, thought for thought and sentence by sentence, to the source text. Excluded from consideration, therefore, would be places where the Book of Mormon appears to be quoting the OT but differs radically from the source text, either by large-scale additions, deletions, or substitutions. In such places one must conclude either that the ancient Book of Mormon author quoted from a different edition of the OT text or that the modern Book of Mormon author has rewritten the OT text. Such differences obviously have no relevance to the question of the dependence of the Book of Mormon on the specific wording of the KJV. In other words, differences that might hypothetically be explained as reflecting textual differences between, say, two different ancient versions of Isaiah, would not be relevant to the relationship of the Book of Mormon to the KJV. What differences are left are those that might arise—and that might be expected—as the result of a different *translation* of the same text. For example, here are some different translations of the first line of Isaiah 11:1:

- "Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse" (HCSB)

- "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse" (ESV)

- "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse" (JPS)

- "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse" (KJV)

- "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse" (NAB)

- "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse" (NASB)

- "A shoot will grow out of Jesse's root stock" (Isa 11:1 NET)

Notice the variations: "then," "there," "and there," or none of these; "a shoot" or "a rod"; "from" or "out of"; "will grow," "will/shall sprout," "will spring," or "shall come forth"; the verb before or after the subject noun; "stump," "stem," "stock," or "root stock"; and "of Jesse" or "Jessee's." These variations alone allow a potential 768 different translations of this one very short line—and there are innumerable more possible translations of the same line if one includes less literal translations such as "Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot" (NLT). Those potential 768 different translations would all represent the same Hebrew text of Isaiah 11:1.

Thus, when the Book of Mormon quotes even one line from the OT with the precise same wording as the KJV, as it does in 2 Nephi 21:1 ("And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse"), the fact that the wording is exactly the same is good evidence for dependence on the KJV. When the wording is identical in dozens of such lines, the evidence for dependence on the KJV becomes absolutely incontrovertible.

Verbal differences between the Book of Mormon wording and the KJV are not, it should be noted, counterbalancing evidence against dependence of the Book of Mormon on the KJV. If five lines of a text are identical to the KJV and five lines have minor verbal differences, the result is not a draw. The verbal differences in those five lines might be perfectly explicable as instances of the author choosing to vary from the wording of the KJV for any of several reasons (modernizing spelling or grammatical form, using a less obscure or archaic form or word, correcting a presumed mistake, etc.).

In comparing the KJV wording of OT passages with the Book of Mormon wording of those same passages, five kinds of differences might be considered: spelling variations, grammatical variations, different words, words lacking, and additional words.

1. *Spelling differences* occur but rarely (in only 66 words throughout the corpus of OT quotations in the Book of Mormon) and are irrelevant to the question of the dependence of the Book of Mormon on the KJV Bible. Therefore, words that are spelled differently will be treated as being the same and ignored in this study.

2. *Grammatical variations* typically fall into three categories: (a) singular vs. plural nouns, (b) varying tense forms of verbs (e.g., *is* vs. *has*), and (c) syntax variations (e.g., *is also* vs. *also is*). Such changes could reflect differing translation choices and so may be relevant to the question of the possible dependence of the Book of Mormon on the KJV Bible. On the other hand, grammatical variations can be consistent with such dependence; for example, in some instances Joseph Smith may have been simply modernizing the grammatical form.

3. *Different words* here means variations in the words occurring at the same place in both versions of the text. Such different words may include (a)

synonyms or phrases with similar meanings (e.g., *they hide it not* vs. *they cannot hide it*), or (b) words or phrases that significantly change the meaning of the text (e.g., *are* vs. *hearken unto*). The former will generally be plausible instances of translation differences, whereas the latter will generally be more suggestive of differences in the text (though this delineation is not absolute).

4. *Words lacking* in this context are words in the KJV that have no corresponding words (even of different meaning) in the relevant Book of Mormon text. Such omissions can be consistent with any of four scenarios: (a) translational or wording differences (thus overlapping with the third category above); (b) the two versions do not reflect the same text; (c) Joseph Smith or his scribe inadvertently omitted the words; or (d) Joseph Smith deliberately chose for whatever reason to omit the words. Which explanation is best must be determined on a case-by-case basis. For example, *say* instead of *say ye* is clearly just a verbal or translational difference and reflects no difference in meaning. The omission of the words "that lay field to field" (2 Ne. 15:8; cf. Isa. 5:8), on the other hand, obviously cannot be explained as a translational difference. Only omissions that are plausibly explained as translational or wording differences are relevant to assessing the dependence of the Book of Mormon on the KJV for its wording of its biblical quotations.

5. *Words added* in this context are words in the Book of Mormon quotation that lacking any corresponding words (even of different meaning) in the relevant biblical text. Such additions can be consistent with any of four scenarios: (a) translational or wording differences (thus overlapping with the third category above); (b) the two versions do not reflect the same text; (c) Joseph Smith or his scribe inadvertently added the words; or (d) Joseph Smith deliberately chose for whatever reason to add the words. Which explanation is best must be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, by far the vast majority of the words added must fall into either the second or fourth scenarios; very few are likely translational or wording differences, and even fewer if any words added are likely to have been added accidentally.

With these preliminary explanations in place, the passages that form the basis of this part of the study may now be defined and the OT and Book of Mormon versions of those passages compared. Passages to be included are those

representing full chapters in the English OT as well as continuous OT passages of four or more verses. If verses are quoted more than once in the Book of Mormon, the fullest quotation of the OT passage is used (thus, no OT passage is counted more than once). These criteria result in a pool of data consisting of 468 verses of the OT from 25 different chapters (see Table 37). These 468 verses contain 13,227 words in the KJV.

TABLE 37. MAJOR OLD TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON	
Book of Mormon Reference	**KJV OT Reference**
1 Nephi 20	Isaiah 48
1 Nephi 21	Isaiah 49
2 Nephi 7	Isaiah 50
2 Nephi 8	Isaiah 51:1-52:2
2 Nephi 12-24	Isaiah 2-14
2 Nephi 27:2-5, 15-19, 25-35	Isaiah 29:6-24
Mosiah 12:34-35; 13:12-24	Exodus 20:2-17
Mosiah 14	Isaiah 53
3 Nephi 20:32,34-45	Isaiah 52:1-3, 6-15
3 Nephi 21:12-18,21	Micah 5:8-15
3 Nephi 22	Isaiah 54
3 Nephi 24-25	Malachi 3-4

The main difference between the KJV and Book of Mormon versions of these OT passages is that the Book of Mormon omits a fair number of words found in the KJV (260 words) and adds a much larger number of words not found in the KJV (1,324 words, of which over half, 666 words, are added to the quotation of Isaiah 29:6-24 in 2 Nephi 27). These verbal omissions and additions are virtually all irrelevant to the translation of the OT text; the Book of Mormon quotations differ in virtually all of these words from *all* versions or translations of the OT, not just the KJV. Thus, in reference to the question of the dependence of the Book of Mormon

on the KJV translation of these OT passages, the omissions and additions may for all practical purposes be ignored.

In the corresponding verses in the Book of Mormon, 12,722 of the 13,227 words in the KJV, or 96 percent, are retained with no change. Of the 505 remaining words of the KJV passages, 260 words (51 percent of the affected words), as mentioned above, are simply omitted in the Book of Mormon with nothing put in their place. Another 136 words (27 percent) appear in different grammatical form, and 109 words (22 percent) are replaced by different words. This means that Book of Mormon quotations from the OT change or omit only about 4 percent of the words of the KJV, and no more than about 2 percent in such a way that might plausibly be explained as a difference in translation. That 2 percent figure, it should be noted, is a high-end estimate; the actual percentage is probably closer to 1 percent, because most of the verbal substitutions cannot be explained as translational differences. Furthermore, because most of the original manuscript (O) of the Book of Mormon, including almost all of the manuscript for the OT quotations, has been lost, one must allow for the likelihood "that single-word differences may simply be due to copying errors, especially when the words are visually similar" (Skousen 1998, 381). Since there are many such single-word differences scattered throughout the OT quotations in the Book of Mormon, the percentage that might hypothetically be explained as translational differences is really miniscule.

There are other ways of looking at the data that confirm the dependence of the Book of Mormon on the KJV. Over half of the OT verses quoted in the Book of Mormon (239 out of 468) are completely unchanged. That statistic is remarkable when one recalls the large number of potential variations even in one line of biblical text, as was illustrated above with regard to the first line of Isaiah 11:1. In the continuous quotation of Isaiah 2-14 in 2 Nephi 12-24, there are several lengthy passages in which the text is identical to that of the KJV (i.e., no verbal differences of *any* kind). These include the quotations of Isaiah 5:1-8a (2 Nephi 15:1-8a, 238 words long), of Isaiah 7:1-6 (2 Nephi 17:1-6, 203 words long), of Isaiah 10:23d-34a (2 Nephi 20:23d-34a, 273 words long), and especially of Isaiah 11:6b-12:2a (2 Nephi 21:6b-22a, 410 words long). In one stretch of almost 36 verses running 991 words (2 Nephi 20:24-23:3a, quoting Isaiah 10:24-13:3a), the wording is identical to the KJV with only one letter difference: "forests" instead of "forest" (2 Ne. 20:34 = Isa. 10:34).

One might expect this many variations, if not more, purely by accident as the result of misreading the KJV.

The evidence adduced here is sufficient to establish beyond reasonable doubt that the Book of Mormon quotations of the OT is directly dependent on the KJV. It is simply not plausible to suggest, for example, that Joseph's translation of the Book of Mormon's quotation of Isaiah 10-13 could be verbally identical to the KJV for a stretch of nearly a thousand words with only one letter difference and yet the two versions not be directed connected. Skousen agreed: "The base text for the Isaiah quotations in the Book of Mormon is indeed the King James Version of the Bible" (Skousen 1998, 373). The evidence therefore allows only two hypothetical explanations for the relationship between the Book of Mormon and the KJV.

(1) Some Mormons have argued that God supernaturally revealed to Joseph Smith a translation of the OT passages quoted in Reformed Egyptian on the gold plates that closely followed the wording of the KJV. The most sophisticated defense of this view is Brant Gardner's argument that the pages of the Bible "appeared in his visual memory," apparently after physically looking at the pages. Gardner emphasized that "such a process would still be miraculous" because "the quantity of pages" involved "would be beyond normal memory" (Gardner 2011, 305, 306).

(2) The other possibility is that Joseph Smith did not actually translate these OT passages from the Reformed Egyptian text on the gold plates, but instead dictated his version of these passages from the KJV, making modifications to the wording as he went along. Perhaps surprisingly, some Mormons have accepted this conclusion (e.g., Roberts 1904, 3:425-40, quoting Joseph F. Smith). Grant Hardy admitted this explanation to be possible, though he thought it did not account for all of the features of the OT quotations (Hardy 2010, 67).

Which of these two explanations is more likely to be correct?

Several considerations show that the hypothesis that God supernaturally revealed to Joseph a translation of the Book of Mormon quotations of the OT so verbally similar to the KJV is highly unlikely. The issue here is not what God *could* do but rather what the evidence shows God *did* or *did not* do. Any such explanation must account not only for the similarities to the KJV but also for the dissimilarities.

One important category of dissimilarities pertains to the italicized words in the KJV. A large number of the verbal changes, especially the grammatical variations,

verbal substitutions, and omissions, are associated with italicized words in the KJV. Words italicized in most editions of the KJV, including the 1769 edition that was available in Joseph Smith's day, were words that had no direct corresponding word in the Hebrew or Greek text but were used to complete the sense or to make the translation more idiomatically acceptable English. Protestants with minimal education in that day—and even to this day—often mistakenly viewed these italicized words as "suspect," either unwarranted "additions" to God's word or fallible guesses as to what the text "should" have said or originally said.

Of the 505 words in the KJV passages that are omitted or changed in the Book of Mormon quotations, 203 (40 percent) are associated with italicized words. The figure is especially high for verbal substitutions: 52 of the 109 words in the KJV translation replaced with different words in the Book of Mormon quotation (48 percent) are italicized words. The best explanation for this high proportion of changes associated with italicized words is that the changes were made with the KJV in hand.

That the changes to the italicized words were made on the basis of their being italicized is confirmed by the nature of some of the changes. In several instances, an italicized word was omitted from the text, resulting in a grammatically awkward wording. This happened several times with the italicized word *is*, as in the line repeated several times in Isaiah, "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* stretched out still" (Isa. 5:25; 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4 KJV). The Book of Mormon originally omitted the italicized *is* in these texts, resulting in the grammatically awkward "but his hand stretched out still" (2 Ne. 15:25; 19:12, 17, 21; 20:4). The same problem occurred with Isaiah's statement, "and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isa. 14:27 KJV), which in the original Book of Mormon reads "and his hand stretched out" (2 Ne. 24:27). The word *is* often appears in italics in the KJV because both Hebrew and Greek could form grammatically acceptable sentences without the copula or "to be" verb. Another instance of this phenomenon is Isaiah's statement, "For every battle of the warrior *is* with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood" (Isa. 9:5); the Book of Mormon originally omitted the word *is*, resulting in a sentence with no main verb (2 Ne. 19:5). In the Book of Mormon, Isaiah's cry "Woe *is* me" (Isa. 6:5 KJV) was originally changed to "Woe me" (2 Ne. 16:5), and his later response "Here *am* I, send me"

(Isa. 6:8 KJV) was changed to "Here I, send me" (2 Ne. 16:8). When the word omitted in the Book of Mormon is something other than the copula, the result can be not merely awkward but wrong, even humorously so. For example, in the same passage just cited, where Isaiah says that the seraph took a coal "and laid *it* upon my mouth" (Isa. 6:7 KJV), the Book of Mormon originally said that the seraph "laid upon my mouth" (2 Ne. 16:7)!

Mormon apologists have generally offered two objections to the conclusion that Joseph Smith dictated the OT chapters of the Book of Mormon using a KJV Bible. The first is that witnesses to Joseph's dictation, especially his wife Emma, attested that he never had a Bible or manuscript with him when he was dictating to his scribes (e.g., Barney 2003, 143). Reasons have already been given in earlier sections of this chapter to question the reliability of the witnesses' accounts of the translation. With regard to Emma's testimony, her statement came in an interview she gave in 1879, fifty years after Joseph produced the Book of Mormon: "He had neither mss [manuscript] nor book to read from. If he had had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me" (*EMD* 1:539, cf. 541). This was the same interview in which, notoriously, Emma denied that Joseph had ever practiced polygamy (cf. Dan Vogel's comment, *EMD* 1:535). The evidence that the Book of Mormon quotations of the OT are dependent on the KJV is simply too pervasive and specific to be overturned by this late and dubious testimony.

The second objection is that in at least one place the Book of Mormon quotes Isaiah in a textual form that departs from the KJV in a way that reflects an authentic ancient text. Specifically, the inclusion of the words "and upon all the ships of the sea" in 2 Nephi 12:16 is cited as evidence that Joseph Smith not only could depart from the KJV but could do so in a way that reflected an authentic ancient reading of Isaiah. Compare the following versions of the first line of Isaiah 2:16:

> *We'al kol-'oniyyôth tarshîsh* [lit., "and upon all ships of Tarshish"] (Isa. 2:16 MT)
> *Kai epi pan ploion thalassēs* [lit., "and upon every ship of the sea"] (Isa. 2:16 LXX)
> Vpon all shippes of the see (Isa. 2:16 Coverdale [1535])
> And upon all the ships of Tarshish (Isa 2:16 KJV [1611])
> And upon all the ships of the sea, and upon all the ships of Tarshish (2 Ne. 12:16)

Two different readings of Isaiah 2:16 are reflected in the above versions, one preserved in the Greek LXX (followed by Coverdale) and the other in the Hebrew MT (followed by the KJV and other English translations). LDS scholar Terryl Givens

commented, "Unless Joseph had access to both versions, which seems unlikely, one reasonable implication of such variations is that the Book of Mormon version predates the other two, each of which dropped a different phrase over time" (T. Givens 2002, 137). Five considerations taken together make this inference quite unlikely.

First of all, both versions were available to Joseph. Not only was the LXX reading followed in the Coverdale Bible, but numerous reference works published in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries mention that reading. Ronald Huggins has shown that several such publications were likely accessible to Joseph when he was working on the translation, perhaps most plausibly John Wesley's 1765 *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament* (Huggins 2003, 168-79). It is also possible that this alternate reading was picked up by Joseph from a sermon or lecture he heard.

Second, Joseph's wording reflects common English paraphrases of the LXX reading in its use of the plural "ships," whereas the Greek word *ploion* is singular, "ship." This minor verbal difference is indicative of Joseph's dependence on an English source for his wording, rather than on a supernaturally revealed rendering of an ancient text (Walters 1990, 59-60, cited in Huggins 2003, 163-64).

Third, the two readings probably arose from a confusion in Greek between *tarshish* and *thalassēs*, words that could sound alike and that could be confused visually if the text was obscured, marred, or poorly penned. This text-critical explanation for the development of the two readings is certainly more likely than the suggestion that the text originally contained both lines. The fact that no ancient or even medieval version of Isaiah in any language has both of these lines, as does 2 Nephi 12:16, weighs heavily against that version of the text being correct.

Fourth, the conflation of two different readings of a text is a common type of textual variant, making it quite plausible that Joseph Smith would have committed this mistake. Knowing both readings were extant, but not knowing which was correct, Joseph simply included both.

Fifth, the Book of Mormon version alters the poetic structure of the text, changing it from a two-line parallelism to a three-line passage. That this alteration disrupts the rhetorical structure of the text is evident when it is read in context. Here is how the passage reads in the ESV (Isa. 2:13-16):

13 against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up;

and against all the oaks of Bashan;

14 against all the lofty mountains,

and against all the uplifted hills;

15 against every high tower,

and against every fortified wall;

16 against all the ships of Tarshish,

and against all the beautiful craft.

Isaiah sets forth four sets of things against which the Lord will come against, with each set described in two lines: against tall trees (v. 13), elevated places (v. 14), tall buildings (v. 15), and large ships (v. 16). The version in 2 Nephi 12, by adding the line "and upon all the ships of the sea" to the beginning of verse 16, clearly disrupts the rhetorical pattern of the passage. Thus, far from providing evidence for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, the text of 2 Nephi 2:16 turns out to be further evidence that its quotations of the OT were produced by Joseph Smith on the basis of the KJV with whatever alterations Joseph chose to make.

6.5.7 Conclusions Regarding the Use of the Old Testament

The evidence is overwhelming that Joseph used a KJV Bible when dictating passages of the OT as parts of the Book of Mormon. Brant Gardner's proposal that Joseph was able to dictate these passages with his face in his hat because he was miraculously able to remember whole pages of the printed Bible, down to the italics, is unnecessarily and unacceptably *ad hoc.* The supposed miracle would apparently have enabled Joseph to remember prodigious amounts of text in the Bible but would not have enabled him to avoid making amateurish mistakes in his handling of the text, such as beginning his quotation of the Suffering Servant passage with Isaiah 53:1 instead of 52:13 or omitting the copula in a number of texts because it was italicized. The evidence shows that Joseph Smith chose to insert large parts of the OT into the Book of Mormon to fill out the replacement text he needed after losing the 116 pages of manuscript dictated in 1828. He did so almost certainly by reading the OT passages to his scribe, making various alterations as he went, a large number of which were placed where the KJV had words in italics. The repetition of so much of Isaiah (supposedly preserved for the Nephites on brass plates) in 1-2

Nephi is implausible in context because those same books incessantly comment on how much the author is forced to omit due to the lack of space on the plates. Thus, a consideration of all of the relevant issues points to the conclusion that Joseph Smith was responsible for the inclusion of those OT texts in the Book of Mormon.

6.6 Onomastics

The brief treatment of the subject of onomastics in relation to the Gospel of Matthew earlier in this study (§4.6) showed that all of the names there fit comfortably in the cultural setting of the Gospel and are consistent with the relative frequencies of Jewish names for the period. Of course, no literature or archaeological data is available from which to derive any information about frequencies of names of the supposed Jaredite and Nephite cultures. However, it is possible to explore the plausibility of Book of Mormon names. The topic is of such interest—or concern—to Mormon scholars that BYU has created a "Book of Mormon Onomasticon" website cataloguing all Book of Mormon proper names and non-English words (Hoskisson et. al. 2014). While a thorough onomastic study of the Book of Mormon is beyond the scope of this dissertation, a brief examination focusing especially on the relationship of Book of Mormon names to the Bible is in order.

The Book of Mormon contains 304 proper names of earthly persons and places. There are 160 names of 200 different Book of Mormon persons and 95 names of Book of Mormon locations (in many cases two or even three places, such as a city and its associated land; an exact number is probably unattainable). These two classes of names overlap: 34 proper names are used to designate both locations and persons. To put it another way, of the 304 proper names in the Book of Mormon, 221 refer to persons and places unknown from the Bible.

A preliminary observation of some importance is the fact that the Book of Mormon is quite sparse in its use of names. The occurrence of 304 names may seem like a lot, but this subjective impression needs to be corrected on the basis of some objective facts. The Bible contains approximately 475 place names alone (Aharoni 1979, 128-29), five times as many as the Book of Mormon, even though the Bible is only about three times as long as the Book of Mormon. The disparity is even greater with regard to personal names: the Bible contains about 2,000 such names, twelve times as many as the Book of Mormon. To look at the matter in

another way, the Book of Mormon has 239 chapters, of which 21 are chapters from Isaiah. Those 21 chapters contain 76 different proper names of people and places, averaging 3.6 names per chapter. The remaining 218 chapters contain the 221 different proper names of Book of Mormon people and places, averaging barely one name per chapter. Thus the concentration of proper names is more than three times higher in the Isaiah chapters than in the rest of the Book of Mormon. What makes this data especially telling is that the Isaiah chapters are prophetic in genre, not historical narrative, as is most of the rest of the Book of Mormon. Since one would expect to find more proper names in historical narrative than in prophecies, the disparity just described is all the more striking.

Of the 221 Book of Mormon names, 47 are verbally identical to names of persons and places in the KJV Bible (i.e., they are spelled exactly the same). This means that the Book of Mormon contains just 174 proper names that are not exact duplicates of names found in the KJV Bible. In addition, at least eight and as many as eleven Book of Mormon names are phonetically identical to Bible names (i.e., they would be more or less indistinguishable when spoken aloud). Many more Book of Mormon names are plausibly and even likely explained as variations on Bible names. These include shortened forms (*Sam* and *Josh* are the two most obvious), Bible names with suffixes attached (e.g., *Amaleki*, *Ammonihah*), names with an initial consonant or prefix attached (e.g., *Antiparah*, *Zenoch*, *Zenos*), and names that are simply very similar to Bible names (e.g., *Abinadi*, *Aminadi*, *Amnor*, *Omni*, and *Sariah*). At least half of the 221 Book of Mormon names can be explained quite easily along these lines, and arguably such explanations are reasonable for far more than half of them. It is therefore quite plausible that Joseph Smith came up with the proper names of the Book of Mormon, based in large measure on Bible names and the creation of variant forms of Bible names.

The presence of so many names in the Book of Mormon that are either identical to Bible names or likely based on them poses something of a problem for standard Book of Mormon apologetics. The standard view is that the Jaredites and Nephites were small subpopulations in the New World (Mesoamerican) civilizations in which they found themselves. They intermarried with the other peoples there, learned their languages, and to a great extent assimilated into their cultures. This apologetic interpretation of the Book of Mormon has some problems, as was

explained previously. However, if the now standard interpretation were correct, one would expect that the vast majority of Jaredite and Nephite proper names would be nonbiblical names. Yet a fourth of the names of Book of Mormon persons and places are verbally or at least phonetically identical to Bible names. Even in the centuries following Christ's appearance, from six to ten centuries after Lehi, 14 of the 49 proper names of persons and newly mentioned places of the Nephites and Lamanites are exact duplicates of Bible names.

That Joseph Smith originated the Book of Mormon names rather than translating them from an ancient text is confirmed by the fact that several of the names are demonstrably anachronistic. At least two categories of anachronistic names may be identified with multiple examples of each.

(1) There are names in the Jaredite record in the Book of Ether that are known Hebrew names. In some cases the names appear fairly late in the Jaredite history, a millennium or more after the Jaredites would have left the Middle East. These include the names Aaron, Akish (cf. Achish), Gilead, Gilgal, and Levi (see Ether 10:14-15; 13:27-30; 14:3-4, 8, 14).

(2) Some of the Nephite names are Greek names (Antipas, Archeantus, Lachoneus, and Timothy) or Greek forms of Hebrew names (Jonas and Judea). Mormons admit as much but argue that the Jews had enough contact with Greek-speaking people in the early sixth century that the Lehites and Mulekites might have brought some Greek names with them to the New World (e.g., Ricks 1992). While of course it is impossible to exclude all contact between Jews and Greek-speaking people prior to the Babylonian Exile, such contact simply is not a plausible source of Greek names for the Nephites centuries later. The foreign peoples with whom Jews prior to the Babylonian conquest had sustained contact were Egyptians, Syrians, and Mesopotamians, not Greeks. Genuine Hellenization of the Jews did not develop until the late fourth century BC following the conquests of Alexander the Great. One of the Greek names in the Book of Mormon, Archeantus, is attributed to a man of the late fourth century AD, roughly a millennium after Lehi's journey (Mormon 9:2). This would be akin to a group of people from Spain colonizing Australia in the fifth century AD and giving their children Arabic names a thousand years later: barely possible, but hardly plausible. Moreover, one of the *Jaredite* names, Esrom, is the KJV transliteration of the Greek *Esrōm* in Matthew 1:3 and Luke 3:33, used for the

Hebrew name of Judah's grandson *Hezron* (Gen. 46:9, 12). It is quite inconceivable that a Jaredite would have borne a Greek form of a Hebrew name.

Admittedly, it is hypothetically *possible* for ancient names of Jaredites and Nephites to be verbally or phonetically identical to names appearing in the KJV and yet have entirely different derivations. However, at least one-fourth of the Book of Mormon names are identical to Bible names, and a dozen of these names have been identified here as anachronistic. Explaining so many such occurrences as coincidences is a highly implausible argument of desperation. By far the most plausible explanation of these names in the Book of Mormon is that Joseph Smith selected them from the KJV—an explanation that coheres well with the evidence already amassed for the dependence of the Book of Mormon on the KJV.

6.7 Genre

The Book of Mormon is composed of fifteen books, all of which, except for the very brief transitional book called Words of Mormon, present themselves as historical narratives. Each of the fourteen narrative books purports to give a chronological account of the history of the peoples in the Book of Mormon lands (the Jaredites in Ether, and the Nephites and Lamanites in the other thirteen books).

There are other genres of material imbedded within the Book of Mormon. The most prominent of these sub-genres are sermons or speeches, including of course the Sermon at the Temple that is the focus of this study (3 Ne. 11-18, especially 12-14). Other sub-genres include letters, an allegory, and visions with accompanying interpretations (*EM*, 1:183-84). It is beyond the scope of this study to examine these passages or to assess whether they exhibit genres consistent with their supposed ancient origin. However, some comments about the larger narrative genre of the Book of Mormon as a whole are in order.

First, the Book of Mormon exhibits far more homogeneity with respect to genre than either the OT or the NT. The OT includes whole books of non-narrative genres such as legal material (Leviticus), songs (Psalms), wisdom sayings (Proverbs), and oracles (many of the books of the Prophets). The longest sequence of books that constitute a continuous historical narrative in the Bible is found in Joshua through 2 Kings, which is much less than half the length of the Book of Mormon. The NT consists of biographies (the Gospels), a history (Acts), epistles,

and an apocalyptic text (Revelation). By contrast, all of the books within the Book of Mormon except for the extremely short transitional Words of Mormon (essentially an editorial insert) are narrative texts of a purportedly historical type.

Second, the presumed historical narratives of the Book of Mormon are not written in the same style or form as the historical narratives of the OT. No historical narrative book of the OT is written in the first person, as are the first six books of the Book of Mormon as well as two of the last three books (Mormon and Moroni). None of the historical narrative books of the Bible have an author's name explicitly given in the text, whereas the Book of Mormon gives explicit information about the supposed authors of every one of its books.

The question of whether the genre of the Book of Mormon narratives is ancient or modern receives further illumination by considering some aspects of the structure of the Book of Mormon.

6.8 Structure

The Book of Mormon narrative follows a chronological structure of counting down from 600 years before Christ to the year of his coming (see 1 Ne. 10:4; 19:8; 2 Ne. 25:19), then forward from the year of his coming somewhat more than 420 years (Moroni 10:1). Several statements marking the number of years since Lehi's departure are given in the books from 2 Nephi through Mosiah (2 Ne. 5:28, 34; Jacob 1:1; Enos 1:25; Jarom 1:5, 13; Omni 1:5; Mosiah 6:4; 29:46), letting the reader know how many years remained until Christ's coming (and in effect allowing modern readers to correlate the narrative with Western chronology).

Immediately following the chronological indicator at the very end of Mosiah, the book of Alma commences a countdown to the birth of Christ using the device of counting the number of years of the Nephite judges from the beginning of the book (see Alma 1:1-2). Alma, 3 Nephi, and 4 Nephi are virtually annalistic, i.e., giving a year by year account of events, in some cases extremely brief and in other cases more extensive. Of the 142 years said to pass from Alma 1:1 to 4 Nephi 1:6, the text comments specifically on 117 years.

The countdown that began at Alma 1:1 continues into 3 Nephi, where Jesus' birth 600 years after Lehi's departure is marked (3 Ne. 1:1), and after finishing 100 years of the judges the chronology changes again to mark the number of years since

Jesus' birth (3 Ne. 2:5-8). This chronological system runs throughout the rest of the Nephite narrative, through the books of 3 Nephi, 4 Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni.

The chronological data from 3 Nephi through Moroni again allows the modern reader to correlate the Book of Mormon narrative with Western chronology. The whole point of all of the chronological information in the Book of Mormon appears to be to provide modern readers with such information. By contrast, the chronological information in the OT is far more haphazard, with the most useful chronological notes having to do with the lengths of the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel. That information, however, reflected ancient conventions that modern scholars had to learn in order to grasp its coherence and consistency (classically worked out in 1951 by Edwin Thiele, see Thiele 1983).

One of the most striking facts about the structure of the Book of Mormon is that it constitutes what may fairly be called a single "testament," in contrast to the clear distinction between the two testaments of the Bible. Indeed, modern editions of the Book of Mormon carry the subtitle *Another Testament of Jesus Christ*. The title is apt in that Jesus Christ is mentioned by name by various characters placed chronologically in the centuries preceding the birth of Jesus. There is little sense of progressive revelation in the Book of Mormon or of types and foreshadowings anticipating fulfilment in the coming of Christ. Instead the historical development of Messianic revelation evident in the Bible (cf. Beale 2011; Bateman, Bock, and Johnston 2012; Hamilton 2014) is flattened in the Book of Mormon. That this characteristic of the Book of Mormon reflects a modern origin is demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt by its patent dependence on the New Testament.

6.9 The New Testament as a Major Source of the Book of Mormon

The subject of the sources of the Book of Mormon has been a perennial topic of study and debate ever since its publication in 1830. Although critics of the Book of Mormon have argued for its dependence on certain modern sources, this study will consider only the question of its use of the Bible. The use of the OT has already been considered (§6.5), so this section will treat its use of the New Testament, a question of direct and obvious relevance to the focus of this study, the relationship of the sermon Jesus reportedly preached to the Nephites in 3 Nephi 12-14 to the SM found in the Gospel of Matthew.

6.9.1 Explicit References to New Testament Figures and Places

One important way in which the Book of Mormon exhibits dependence on the NT is in its references to NT persons, events, and places. The outstanding instances of this phenomenon are the explicit references by name to John (the apostle), Mary, and especially Jesus Christ, and to the places Bethabara and Nazareth. The references to Jesus, because of their great number and importance, will be treated separately after the others.

The apostle John is mentioned by name three times in the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 14:27; 3 Ne. 28:6; Ether 4:16). In the first of these references, an angel tells Nephi that "one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" will write a fuller account of the visions that had been shown in part to Nephi, and that his account would be part of a Jewish book (obviously a reference to the Bible, or more specifically the NT). "And I, Nephi, heard and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John, according to the word of the angel" (1 Ne. 14:27). The Book of Mormon peoples, though, were never to have the opportunity to make any use of this knowledge. The name John would have meant nothing to them, and they were never going to meet John. For that reason, it is simply more plausible that Joseph Smith learned the name from the NT than that Nephi learned the name from an angel.

The Book of Mormon mentions Mary, the mother of Jesus, twice. The Lord will come and live among human beings, "and he shall be called Jesus Christ…and his mother shall be called Mary" (Mosiah 3:8). The Redeemer "shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God" (Alma 7:10). Another passage refers to her not by name, but describes her as "a virgin" who was "exceedingly fair and white…a virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins…the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh" (1 Ne. 11:13, 15, 18; later editions read "the mother of the Son of God"). These descriptions reflect the tradition of portraying Mary as a supremely beautiful woman, a tradition completely absent from the NT but growing out of the extremely high esteem with which all Christians, including Protestants, have regarded Mary. For an example from the eighteenth

century, with quotations from various figures throughout church history, see Alphonsus Liguori's *The Glories of Mary* (Liguori 2000).

Although the description of Mary as the most beautiful of girls reflects postbiblical tradition, some of the language used in reference to Mary clearly echoes that of the NT (cf. especially Alma 7:10 with Luke 1:35). The passage in 1 Nephi 11 also mentions the city of Nazareth (1 Ne. 11:13). Since Nazareth did not exist in the days of Lehi and Nephi, and since none of the Book of Mormon peoples were ever going to be anywhere near Nazareth, no plausible reason can be given for why this piece of information would be revealed to Nephi. The purpose is clearly to attribute to this major character in the Book of Mormon the sort of explicit knowledge of the future that many people, no doubt including Joseph Smith, associate with prophets.

Another more egregious instance of this phenomenon comes just one chapter earlier in the Book of Mormon. Nephi is presented as reporting that his father Lehi had received a revelation conveying extensive information about John the Baptist, though never mentioning his name (in contrast to the apostle John). In this context, Nephi says that his father revealed that the future prophet "should baptize in Bethabara, beyond the Jordan" (1 Ne. 10:9). *Bethabara* was a variant reading of John 1:28 that gained ascendancy following the third-century Christian scholar Origen, who favored this reading against what he admitted was nearly all of the manuscript evidence known to him. Contemporary translations overwhelmingly agree that the correct reading is "*Bethany* beyond Jordan" (of the dozen translations consulted for this study, only the NKJV, an updated version of the KJV, had "Bethabara"). "Bethany beyond Jordan" is the reading of the *earliest* manuscripts and has the strongest overall support from a text-critical perspective (Metzger 1994, 171; *NET/NTG*, 835; and see especially Riesner 1987). The qualification "beyond Jordan" evidently identifies this Bethany as a different place than the well-known Bethany "near Jerusalem" (John 11:18).

While the place-name of the location where John met Jesus was meaningful to him and has a meaningful role in the narrative of his Gospel, there is no plausible purpose for the reference to "Bethabara, beyond Jordan" in 1 Nephi 10:9. Its presence in the Book of Mormon can only be explained as an attempt by Joseph Smith to write into the narrative an example of one of its characters having explicit knowledge about the future revealed to him as a prophet.

It should be particularly noted that no objection has been made here to the idea that God might supernaturally reveal the name of a future human being. If one accepts a traditional, conservative view of the Bible, one sees such an occurrence quite famously in the case of Isaiah's prophecy of Cyrus (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). Less famously, 1 Kings reports that a prophet (who is unnamed!) warned Jeroboam that a future descendant of David, "Josiah by name," would execute those who served at the illegitimate altar at Bethel (1 Kings 13:2). The objections that have been raised here to the Book of Mormon references to John, Mary, Nazareth, and Bethabara have not been a priori objections to supernaturally revealed information. Rather, problematic aspects of these references have shown that these names were made part of the narrative by a modern author.

6.9.2 Pre-Incarnation References to Jesus Christ

The Book of Mormon plainly claims that God revealed both to the Jaredites and to the Nephites the names *Jesus* and *Christ* in reference to the one who would come to redeem people from sin. These and other common Christian designations for Jesus appear in the Book of Mormon narratives of people living before his birth (that is, in 1 Nephi through Helaman and in Ether). The way these names are introduced makes it clear that the reader is to regard such references as reporting what the ancient writers wrote. Thus, in the first occurrence of the term Christ, the Book of Mormon presents Jacob as explaining, "Wherefore, as I said unto you, it must needs be expedient that Christ—for in the last night the angel spake unto me that this should be his name—should come among the Jews" (2 Ne. 10:3). Here Jacob is represented as saying that an angel told him that the coming figure's name would be Christ. Later in the same book the first occurrence of the name Jesus comes with a similar explanation (2 Ne. 25:19).

From a Mormon perspective, the references to Jesus Christ by name in pre-Incarnation passages of the Book of Mormon pose no *a priori* problem. As Brant Gardner commented, "It certainly is no problem for a prophet to know a future name" (Gardner 2007, 2:338). The one problem that Mormon scholars have struggled to resolve with regard to Book of Mormon references to Jesus is its use of the name *Christ*, which is an Anglicized form of the Greek *Christos* meaning "anointed one." This might not be much of a problem except that the Book of Mormon also uses the

corresponding title *Messiah*, an Anglicized form of the Hebrew *Māshîach*, also meaning "anointed one." It even does so in the same sentence—twice, when introducing the name Jesus Christ: "they shall believe in Christ…and look not forward any more for another Messiah" (2 Ne. 25:16); "for according to the words of the prophets, the Messiah cometh in six hundred years…his name shall be Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (25:19).

The Book of Mormon does not present pre-Incarnation prophets as merely referring to Jesus by name, but as giving information about the coming of the Messiah with an explicitness and level of specific detail unlike anything found in the OT. This "Messiah" would be the "Savior of the world" and would come "six hundred years" after Lehi left Jerusalem (1 Ne. 10:4). A prophet would come prior to the Messiah; according to Nephi, his father Lehi quoted what that future prophet would say at some length (10:7-8). The prophet would "baptize in Bethabara, beyond Jordan," and would specifically baptize the Messiah in water and testify that he was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (10:9-10). The Jews would slay the Messiah, and he would then "rise from the dead" (10:11). Nephi then had a vision, in which he saw "the city of Nazareth" and "a virgin" there who would be "the mother of [the Son of] God" (11:13, 18). Nephi saw the Redeemer get baptized by the prophet Lehi had described, and saw the Holy Ghost descend on the Lamb of God in the form of a dove (11:27). He saw his twelve followers, and watched him healing the multitudes from their sicknesses and diseases and casting out their devils and unclean spirits (11:28-31). Nephi saw the Son of God "lifted up upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world" (11:33).

As has been acknowledged more than once, from a Mormon perspective anyone who believes in God and prophetic revelation can have no *a priori* objection to God revealing the names of Jesus to Book of Mormon prophets. Likewise, those who believe in the possibility of revelation must acknowledge the possibility of God revealing the sorts of details concerning Jesus seen in the pre-Incarnation visions of Lehi and Nephi. The obvious question, though, is why the Book of Mormon prophets would have known Jesus' names centuries before his birth and included them in their prophetic literature while none of the OT prophets did so.

The standard LDS answer is that the OT prophets undoubtedly did refer explicitly to the name of Jesus but those references were removed or lost in the

history of the transmission of the OT text (e.g., Nyman 2003, 600). This explanation is implicit in the Book of Mormon itself, which, shortly after setting forth Lehi's and Nephi's detailed and explicit revelations of the future coming of the Messiah reviewed above (1 Ne. 10-11), explains why the OT is not as "plain" in its revelations of the Messiah. Nephi is told by the angel that the Bible will be corrupted by "the great and abominable church" which shall take away "many plain and precious things" from it, and this loss of plainness will result in Satan getting great power over many people (13:28-29). This statement is commonly interpreted as explaining why the name of Jesus Christ and explicit details about him are not found in the OT. "Surely the most plain and precious of all truths lost from the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, are the clear and unequivocal declarations of the mission of Jesus Christ" (Holland 2006, 6; see also Madsen 2005, 18; Barlow 2013, 37-38).

Ironically, the Book of Mormon contains within itself evidence that refutes this explanation for the greater explicitness and detail of Book of Mormon Messianic prophecies as compared to the OT. The Book of Mormon contains two dozen chapters of the OT, supposedly translated from gold plates whose authors were prophets safeguarding an uncorrupted version of most of the OT books preserved on the "plates of brass." Moreover, the OT chapters reproduced in the Book of Mormon include several famous Messianic prophecies, most obviously Isaiah 7, 9, 11, and 53 (2 Ne. 17, 19, 21; Mosiah 14). If one would expect to find explicit references to Jesus Christ by name anywhere in the OT, these would be among the top places one would expect to find such references. Yet no such references exist.

The name *Jesus* appears 185 times in the Book of Mormon, including 45 times in pre-Incarnation contexts. The name *Christ* occurs 380 times, including 223 times before Christ's coming. *Messiah* occurs 32 times, all in pre-Incarnation contexts. Thus, these three names appear a total of 300 times in the Book of Mormon in contexts prior to the Incarnation (of which 22 are conjoined in the compound name *Jesus Christ*). Yet of these 300 occurrences, *only one* appears in a passage purportedly quoting from an OT text, and it is not a Messianic prophecy at all. This one exception is the very lengthy section of material inserted into Isaiah 29 in 2 Nephi 27, where the new material is a supposed prophecy of Joseph Smith translating the Book of Mormon after the "learned" man (Charles Anthon) admitted he was unable to do so (see §6.2.2 on the Anthon affair and §6.5.6 on the rewriting

of Isaiah 29 in 2 Nephi 27). In the midst of this passage comes the statement, "And the day cometh that the words of the book which were sealed shall be read upon the house tops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ" (2 Ne. 27:11). This statement is not even about Christ, but merely uses a common Christian expression (derived from 2 Corinthians 12:9) that happens to use the name *Christ.*

In the many lengthy excerpts from Isaiah in 1-2 Nephi and 3 Nephi and the lengthy quotation from Malachi in 3 Nephi 24-25, nowhere does the Book of Mormon represent the OT as speaking more plainly about the future Messiah. None of these OT quotations in the Book of Mormon speak about Jesus being crucified, his body placed in a sepulchre, and him rising from the dead after three days. Yet all of these things appear repeatedly in the Book of Mormon passages surrounding the OT excerpts. This is really inexplicable if the OT prophets originally spoke explicitly of Jesus Christ but those references were excised by the apostate church. If that were true, why would such explicit statements not be found in the prophecies of Immanuel (Isa. 7:14), the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:1-7), the Branch of Jesse (Isa. 11:1-9), or the Suffering Servant (Isa. 52:13-53:12)?

In short, the *distribution* of the names, titles, and descriptions of Jesus in the Book of Mormon is compelling evidence that it was composed by a modern author influenced by the NT.

6.9.3 Clear Allusions to New Testament Texts

Mormon scholar Grant Hardy has acknowledged that "any quotations in the Book of Mormon from biblical writings composed after 600 BC are anachronistic, potentially challenging both the book's historicity and its credibility" (Hardy 2010, 255). The Book of Mormon has such quotations, though it offers explanations for some of them. So, for example, Malachi 3-4 can appear in the Book of Mormon even though Malachi was written about two centuries after 600 BC because Jesus quoted it when he appeared to the Nephites (3 Ne. 24-25). The passage that is the focus of this study, 3 Nephi 12-14, largely duplicates Matthew 5-7 because it was a speech that it is understood Jesus himself had given in Galilee (cf. 3 Ne. 15:1). However, when such material is set aside for the sake of argument, a great deal of material in the Book of Mormon remains that is evidently taken from the NT and for which no plausible explanation can be given that is consistent with its supposed antiquity.

Three aspects of the evidence need to be considered. First, a great quantity of material in the Book of Mormon appears to be taken from the NT. Second, this material exhibits in many places close verbal correspondences to the wording of the KJV. Third, in some instances, the textual material is not only substantial and verbally close to the KJV, but the material is on other grounds anachronistic. The following are some key findings on the use of the NT in the Book of Mormon:

- There are significant correspondences to NT passages in every book of the Book of Mormon except the three shortest one-chapter books of Jarom, Omni, and Words of Mormon.

- There are over 200 such correspondences scattered throughout about 86 of the chapters of the Book of Mormon.

- There are 29 correspondences in which the Book of Mormon includes a string of 10 or more words perfectly matching the text in the KJV of the NT passage. These include 5 correspondences with identical word strings of more than 20 words each.

- There are significant correspondences in the Book of Mormon to passages in 19 of the 27 books of the NT, excluding only most of the short epistles (2 Thess., 1 Tim., Titus, Philem., 1 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude).

- The NT chapters with the most separate correspondences (defined as those found in separate chapters of the Book of Mormon) are Matthew 7 (ten, not counting 3 Nephi 14) and 1 Corinthians 15 (nine).

- Of the more than 200 correspondences in the Book of Mormon to the NT, about 48 are correspondences to passages in the Gospel of Matthew. This is twice as much as the next largest number (24, to passages in the Gospel of John). The 48 correspondences to Matthew include 21 correspondences to verses in the Sermon on the Mount (SM) in Matthew 5-7, *not counting the Sermon at the Temple (ST) in 3 Nephi 12-14*.

The last two findings are of obvious interest and relevance with regard to the correspondence of the sermon in 3 Nephi 12-14 to the SM. If it can be shown that the author of the Book of Mormon made heavy use of Matthew even apart from the ST, this will provide strong evidence that the correspondence of the ST to the SM is evidence of direct literary dependence on Matthew.

TABLE 38. MAJOR NEW TESTAMENT—BOOK OF MORMON CORRESPONDENCES			
New Testament Passage	**Book of Mormon Passage**	**Words Shared**	**Word Strings**
John 1:26-29	1 Ne. 10:8-10	36	9, 9
Matt. 25:34, 41, 46	2 Ne. 9:16, 18	28	8
Matt. 3:2, 10	Alma 5:51-52	33	26
Matt. 3:2-3, 8, 11	Alma 9:25, 27-30	25	8
Matt. 16:19	Helaman 10:7	26	14
John 1:9-12	3 Ne. 9:16-18	28	15
Acts 3:22-26	3 Ne. 20:23-27a	121	47
Mark 16:15-18	Mormon 9:22-24	82	80
Mark 16:16-17a	Ether 4:18	24	24
1 Cor. 12:4-11	Moroni 10:8-17	91	10
1 Cor. 13:3-8, 13	Moroni 7:44-46	57	32
1 John 3:1-3	Moroni 7:48	37	18

Table 38 lists a dozen of the most substantive correspondences in terms of the larger thought expressed, the total number of words shared, and the length of the longest word strings the two passages share. The passages are listed by canonical order in the Book of Mormon. Although a careful analysis of each of these twelve correspondences would be highly informative, in this study such analysis will be provided for just three outstanding examples.

The longest NT passage of the ones listed in Table 38 is 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, shown alongside Moroni 10:8-17 in Table 39. The verbal parallels, especially in view of the fact that Moroni lists all nine of the gifts listed by Paul and in the same order (wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues), demand a literary relationship between the two texts.

Explanations that might avoid the Book of Mormon text's dependence on Paul are simply too *ad hoc.* For example, it is not plausible to suggest that God revealed the same ideas to Moroni in much the same words as he did to Paul—not because there is any doubt about God's ability to reveal the same thing in similar words, but because the concerns of the two texts are so radically different. Paul was writing to predominantly Greek believers in a young, spiritually immature church little more than twenty years after Christ's resurrection. They were zealous for spiritual gifts, so much so that they had lost sight of the purpose of the gifts to build up one another in love. Moroni 10 recasts the material as an exhortation not to deny spiritual gifts or to accept the doctrine that those gifts had passed away (Moroni 10:19). That is, Moroni 10 is supposedly responding to an error at the other extreme from the error of the

Corinthians! Such a radically different concern would call for a very different sort of response. Of course, Moroni 10 was addressing a concern of nineteenth-century Protestants, not of fifth-century Lamanites. That the passage was directed to a concern in Joseph Smith's immediate situation is clear from the most significant change he makes to the passage. Whereas Paul had listed "discerning of spirits" as one of the gifts, in Moroni 10 this is changed to "the beholding of angels and ministering spirits." This detail betrays the real purpose of the passage, which was to use Paul's words to encourage Joseph's readers to accept the Book of Mormon as the fruit of his supposed spiritual gift of being able to see angels and other spirits.

TABLE 39. COMPARING 1 CORINTHIANS 12 AND MORONI 10	
1 Corinthians 12:4-11	Moroni 10:8-17
Now there are diversities of **gifts**, but **the same** Spirit. **And there are differences** of **administrations**, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, **but it is** **the same God which worketh all in all**.	And again, I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the **gifts** of God, for they are many; and they come from **the same** God. **And there are different** ways that these gifts are **administered**; **but it is** **the same God who worketh all in all**; and they are **given**
But **the manifestation of the Spirit** is **given** to every **man to profit** withal. For **to one is given by the Spirit**	by **the manifestations of the Spirit** of God unto **men, to profit** them. **For** behold, **to one is given by the Spirit** of God, that he may teach
the word of wisdom; to another	**the word of wisdom**; And **to another**, that he may teach
the word of knowledge **by the same Spirit;** **To another faith** by the same Spirit; **to another the gifts of healing** **by the same Spirit; To another** the **working** of **miracles**; **to another prophecy**;	**the word of knowledge** **by the same Spirit;** And **to another**, exceedingly great **faith**; and **to another, the gifts of healing** **by the same Spirit**; And again, **to another**, that he may **work** mighty **miracles**; And again, **to another**, that he may **prophesy** concerning all things;
to another discerning **of spirits**; **to another** *divers* **kinds of tongues**; **to another** **the interpretation** **of tongues**: But **all these** worketh that one and the selfsame **Spirit**, dividing to **every man severally** **as he will**.	And again, **to another**, the beholding **of** angels and ministering **spirits**; And again, **to another**, all **kinds of tongues**; And again, **to another**, **the interpretation** of languages and of divers kinds **of tongues**. And **all these** gifts come by the **Spirit** of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according **as he will**.

The extensive use of 1 Corinthians 12 in Moroni 10 is not the only substantial correspondence with 1 Corinthians in the Book of Mormon. Earlier in Moroni, a rumination on the Pauline triad of faith, hope, and charity (Moroni 7:42-44) is followed by the central description of charity in Paul's famous ode to charity in 1 Corinthians 13 is duplicated, with just two of the negations dropped ("charity vaunteth not itself…doth not behave itself unseemly"). The rest of the description is verbally identical to Paul's, with a 32-word string unchanged except for the addition of the word *and* (see Table 40). The close proximity of Moroni 7 and 10 and their extensive correspondences to 1 Corinthians 13 and 12 should remove any doubt that Moroni is dependent on Paul, and specifically on Paul as translated in the KJV.

TABLE 40. COMPARING 1 CORINTHIANS 13 AND MORONI 7	
1 Corinthians 13:3-8, 13	**Moroni 7:42-46**
And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and **have not charity**, I **am nothing**. **Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind**; charity **envieth not**; charity vaunteth not itself, **is not puffed up**, Doth not behave itself unseemly, **seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth**; **Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.** **Charity never faileth**…. And now abideth **faith, hope, charity**, these three; but **the greatest of** these *is* **charity**.	Wherefore, if a man have **faith** he must needs have **hope**; for without **faith** there cannot be any **hope**. And again, behold I say unto you that he cannot have **faith** and **hope**, save he shall be meek, and lowly of heart. If so, his **faith** and **hope** is vain, for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart; and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have **charity**; for if he **have not charity** he **is nothing**; wherefore he must needs have charity. And **charity suffereth long, and is kind,** and **envieth not**, and **is not puffed up**, **seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil**, and **rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth**, **beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things**. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for **charity never faileth**. Wherefore, cleave unto **charity**, which **is the greatest of** all, for all things must fail.

The final passage to be considered here is Mormon 9:22-24. This passage is verbally identical to Mark 16:15-18 except for the addition of the word *and*, shown in brackets below:

> Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; [And] he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned; And these signs shall follow them that believe—in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

In his six-volume commentary on the Book of Mormon, Brant Gardner admitted that this passage "echoes" material in Mark 16, which he said has "influenced" the wording of the Book of Mormon text: "The meaning fits into Moroni's discourse, but the language is influenced by the New Testament" (Gardner 2007, 6:133). The language of Mormon 9:22-24, however, is the *exact wording* of Mark 16:15-18; the relationship goes far beyond "influence." Except for the second occurrence of the word *and*, this text is identical, word for word, to Mark 16:15-18 in the KJV. Jesus supposedly said these words to the Nephites in the first century, and Moroni quoted them in the early fifth century in Reformed Egyptian. Yet Joseph Smith's English "translation" reads exactly the same as the KJV for 80 words. This point alone would be sufficient to conclude that the passage was simply inserted into the text by its modern author Joseph Smith.

Yet there is another consideration that puts this conclusion beyond reasonable doubt. According to Mormon 9:22, the above words were spoken by Jesus to his Nephite disciples—just as Mark 16:15-18 reports Jesus as saying these very same words to his Jewish disciples in the Old World. The problem is that it is reasonably certain that Jesus never made this speech to his Jewish disciples. These verses are part of the Long Ending of Mark (16:9-20), which biblical scholars almost unanimously agree was composed and added to the Gospel sometime after it was originally written (see Metzger 1994, 102-106; Kelhoffer 2000; and the essays by Daniel B. Wallace, J. Keith Elliott, and Darrell Bock in Black ed. 2008). The point has been cautiously conceded by at least one Mormon scholar, Carol Ellertson, though she does not comment on the significance of this conclusion for the corresponding Book of Mormon passage (Ellertson 2006, 100).

Once it is realized that Jesus did not give the speech to his Jewish disciples found in Mark 16:15-18, it becomes all but impossible to maintain that Jesus gave the same speech to the Nephites. Of course, the Nephites had no access to any version of the New Testament, let alone to later scribal additions to the New Testament. Moroni, then, had no way of knowing about the speech attributed to Jesus in the Long Ending of Mark. The only plausible explanation for the inclusion of that speech in Mormon 9:22-24 is that it was copied into the Book of Mormon by its modern author, who had access to the Long Ending in the KJV.

If Joseph Smith had truly been receiving a translation of writing on ancient gold plates by a supernatural power from God, he would not have included in that translation statements attributed to Jesus Christ in a second-century addition to the Gospel of Mark. Mormon 9:22-24 is strong evidence for two crucially important conclusions regarding the Book of Mormon. First, it is clear that Joseph Smith did in fact use the KJV of the Bible when producing his manuscript of the Book of Mormon. Second, the Book of Mormon includes statements attributed to Jesus that he never actually said. This particular passage therefore constitutes a significant piece of evidence supporting the view that the Book of Mormon was not translated from ancient scriptures but is a modern composition.

6.9.4 The Bible as a Major Source of the Book of Mormon

Mormon scholar Robert J. Matthews has claimed, "The Book of Mormon is separate and independent and is not based upon the Bible for its source" (Matthews 2008, 193). Considerable evidence presented in this study has decisively refuted this claim. The evidence considered in this section demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt that the Book of Mormon is heavily dependent on the NT as a literary source, and specifically on the NT in the KJV. This finding is consistent with the conclusion reached earlier that the Book of Mormon is dependent on the KJV for its quotations from Isaiah and other OT books. Thus, it should be regarded as a settled fact that the Book of Mormon drew upon the KJV of the Bible as a major source.

6.10 Authorship, Date, and Provenance

The findings of this chapter strongly support the conclusion that the Book of Mormon is modern, not ancient, in origin. This finding needs only one qualification: a

major source of the Book of Mormon is the KJV of the Bible, an early modern English translation of a collection of ancient texts in both the OT and the NT. Those parts of the Book of Mormon taken directly from the Bible, then, are ancient in origin, but they have been integrated into a modern text composed to give the impression that the whole is ancient scripture.

Mormon apologists commonly contend that Joseph Smith could not possibly have composed the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith, they explain, was simply not literate enough or knowledgeable enough to have composed something as long, complex, literate, and credible as the Book of Mormon. Some go further: no mortal then or now could have done it. Joseph dictated essentially all of the Book of Mormon in little more than two months. He did not have time, let alone the ability, to consult other books. Some features of the Book of Mormon that LDS scholars now identify as ancient were completely unknown until after Joseph published it. John Welch maintained that "the mere existence of the Book of Mormon is one of the greatest miracles in history" (Welch 1992a, 1).

The classic statement of the Mormon apologetic argument against Joseph Smith as the author of the Book of Mormon comes from Hugh Nibley, who used to issue a hypothetical challenge to his students at BYU. He gave them the mock assignment of turning in by the end of the semester a paper of five hundred or more pages in length, in the form of a sacred history of ancient Jews spanning a thousand years and filled with names and a variety of rich details appropriate to the period. "Above all, do not ever contradict yourself!" (Nibley 1989, 220-21). His hypothetical assignment has been expanded by others and is currently circulating in various forms on the Internet under the title "Book of Mormon Challenge." Of course, the premise of the challenge is that the Book of Mormon itself fits the description. To the contrary, it does not, as this chapter has sought to demonstrate.

As a matter of historical inquiry, the proper question to ask is not how Joseph Smith could have written the Book of Mormon but rather whether the evidence shows that he did so. Both external and internal evidence point to the 1820s as the date of the composition of the Book of Mormon. In terms of external evidence, the earliest extant references to the book come from Joseph Smith, his associates, and local newspapers in the late 1820s. The earliest physical evidence consists of the "original manuscript" (O) and the printer's manuscript (P) of Joseph's purported

translation, both produced in 1829. The gold plates that supposedly contained the ancient text of the Book of Mormon are not extant, and the witnesses who claim to have seen them are a group of men almost entirely from Joseph's family and that of his supporters the Whitmers. The so-called Anthon transcript, a small piece of paper containing markings said to have been copied from the gold plates, is of uncertain provenance; it may be a copy or even fraudulent, and in any case its markings have no consistent relationship to either Hebrew or Egyptian. Inconsistencies in the information provided about the plates and Joseph's subterfuge and manipulative actions raise serious doubts about the existence of the plates.

The internal evidence poses an array of critical difficulties for the view that the Book of Mormon is a translation of ancient scriptures. Mormon scholars are not able to agree even among themselves as to the location of the main Book of Mormon lands, although most seek to correlate its geographical references with some part of Mesoamerica. The Book of Mormon peoples arrive in the New World at the wrong times and from the wrong places; they speak the wrong languages and adhere to the wrong religious beliefs to be the ancient peoples of Mesoamerica. Mormon scholars have been forced by the archaeological and genetic evidence to reinterpret the Book of Mormon as narrating events in the history of a small subpopulation in a part of Mesoamerica in order to explain away the lack of a coherent match. The Book of Mormon addresses religious and cultural issues and questions of early nineteenth-century Protestant Americans, so much so that Mormons have traditionally viewed the Book of Mormon as written intentionally for modern readers. Yet that view has become less tenable as the cultural distance from Joseph Smith's world widens. The most egregious problem is the patent literary dependence of the Book of Mormon on the KJV Bible, both with regard to the OT, from which the Book of Mormon quotes two dozen chapters, and with regard to the NT, from which it draws over two hundred statements and passages. This use of the Bible not only reflects the wording of the KJV, it reflects historical developments of religious beliefs and traditions about the Bible that identity the Book of Mormon as a modern work.

All of this evidence, coming from numerous disciplines of study, converges on the conclusion that the Book of Mormon originated in the New England area in the late 1820s. Its author appears to have been Joseph Smith himself.

6.11 Conclusion

As explained in the first chapter, this study tests three hypotheses about the Book of Mormon, with the primary test passage being the Sermon at the Temple (ST) in 3 Nephi 12-14. The first hypothesis is that the Book of Mormon recounts historical events as they happened and that its speeches, including the ST, are accurate reports of speeches given on the occasions indicated in the narrative (cf. Welch 1990, 1999). The findings of this chapter pose overwhelming difficulties for this hypothesis as it regards the Book of Mormon as a whole.

The second hypothesis is that the Book of Mormon is grounded in history, but the narrative details and the wording of the speeches, including the ST, may include non-historical elements resulting from the use of the Bible or other sources in the modern translation (cf. Ostler 1987; Gardner 2007, 5:396-472). This hypothesis would have merit only if two claims on which it depends could be validated: that the Book of Mormon is a translation from the gold plates, and that the larger narrative of the Book of Mormon fits into ancient history in a coherent way. Both of these claims have been brought into serious question in this chapter.

This leaves the third hypothesis, which is that the Book of Mormon is a modern fiction and its speeches, including the ST, are nineteenth-century creations reflecting the Bible and its use in preaching and teaching in Joseph Smith's culture. This chapter has presented a case for this view of the Book of Mormon. It is a modern work of fiction passed off as ancient historical scripture focused on the supposed coming of Jesus Christ to the Americas shortly after his resurrection. As such, the Book of Mormon may properly be categorized as modern apocryphal literature. More narrowly, one might classify the book of 3 Nephi as an "apocryphal gospel," since it constitutes a fictional narrative covering the period of Christ's birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances.

The cogency of this characterization of the Book of Mormon will be tested in detail in the final chapter of this study by a close examination of the ST.

7 CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE SERMON AT THE TEMPLE

This chapter applies the findings of chapters 4, 5, and 6 to the assessment of the historical authenticity of the Sermon at the Temple (ST) in the Book of Mormon, focusing especially on the part of that sermon (3 Ne. 12-14) that parallels the Sermon on the Mount (SM) in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 5-7). The preliminary conclusion reached at the end of chapter 6 of this study, that the Book of Mormon is a modern work and not an authentic translation of ancient scriptures, is confirmed through a careful study of the ST.

7.1 Textual Criticism of the Sermon at the Temple

One of the most contested issues in the study of the ST is the use of textual criticism to demonstrate the dependence of the ST on the SM as it appears in the King James Version (KJV). The principal scholars who have debated this issue have been Stan Larson and John Welch (see above, §2.6). This study takes a different approach to the matter in two respects. First, it places the issue of the text-critical evidence for the dependence of the ST on the KJV in a broader context. Second, it employs a different method in applying the findings of textual criticism to the question. Instead of seeking to base an argument on a few incontrovertible examples, the method used here is that of inference from the text-critical evidence as a whole to the best explanation for that evidence.

7.1.1 The Texts of the Matthean (KJV) and Book of Mormon Sermons

The first order of business is to establish the text of the ST that will be compared to the text of the SM in the KJV. As explained in the previous chapter (§6.2.4.5), because this study concerns the historical authenticity of the ST, the text of interest is the "original text" of the Book of Mormon as Joseph Smith dictated it to his scribes in 1829. Since the portion of that original manuscript ("O") containing the

ST is no longer extant, this study takes as its point of departure the first edition of the Book of Mormon, with any appropriate corrections that might be made on the basis of the printer's manuscript (P, see Skousen ed. 2001b). Royal Skousen's volume analysing textual variants in 3 Nephi (Skousen 2008) has also been consulted. In general, Skousen's conclusions regarding the best wording for the critical text of the Book of Mormon have been followed; exceptions will be noted.

Table 41 presents side by side the texts of the SM as it appears in the 1769 edition of the KJV and of the ST as it appears in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, with a few variations as mentioned above. See the lettered notes for comments on specific textual issues. The texts are colour coded as follows:

Black bold: The same word spelled differently in the two texts

Blue: Different forms (tenses, number, etc.) of the same word, including words relocated in the sentence

Brown: Different words occupying basically corresponding places in the texts of the SM and the ST (i.e., where the ST appears to substitute different wording for what is in the SM)

Green: Words in the SM omitted in the ST

Red: Words in the ST with no corresponding words in the SM

Purple: Narrative text not found in Matthew

Table 41. Texts of the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple	
Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-7:27 ᴋᴊᴠ)	**Sermon at the Temple** (3 Nephi 12-14)
	1 Blessed are ye, if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve which I have chosen from among you to minister unto you and to be your servants; and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water; and after that ye are baptized with water, behold I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost; therefore blessed are ye, if ye shall believe in me, and be baptized, after that ye have seen me, and know that I am.
	2 And again, more blessed are they which shall believe in your words, because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. Yea, blessed are they which shall believe in your words, and come

	down into the depths of humility, and be baptized; for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.
3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit:	3 Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit, which[a] cometh[b] unto me,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
4 Blessed *are* they that mourn:	4 And again, blessed are all they that mourn,
for they shall be comforted.	for they shall be comforted;
5 Blessed *are* the meek:	5 and blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.	for they shall inherit the earth.
6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:	6 And blessed are all they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness,
for they shall be filled.	for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.
7 Blessed *are* the merciful:	7 And blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.	for they shall obtain mercy.
8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart:	8 And blessed are all the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.	for they shall see God.
9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers:	9 And blessed are all the peace-makers,
for they shall be called the children of God.	for they shall be called the children of God.
10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:	10 And blessed are all they which are persecuted for my name sake,[c]
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
11 Blessed are ye,	11 And blessed are ye
when *men* shall revile you,	when men shall revile you,
and persecute *you*,	and persecute,
and shall say all manner of evil	and shall say all manner of evil
against you falsely, for my sake.	against you falsely, for my sake,
12 Rejoice,	12 for ye shall have great joy
and be exceeding glad:	and be exceeding[d] glad,
for great *is* your reward in heaven:	for great shall be your reward in Heaven:
for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.	for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.
	13 Verily, verily I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth;
13 Ye are the salt of the earth:	
but if the salt have lost his savour,	but if the salt shall lose its savor,
wherewith shall it be salted?	wherewith shall the earth be salted?
it is thenceforth good for nothing,	The salt shall be thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out,
but to be cast out,	
and to be trodden under foot of men.	and to be trodden under foot of men.
	14 Verily, verily I say unto you: I give unto you to be the light of this people.
14 Ye are the light of the world.	
A city that is set on **an** hill cannot be hid.	A city that is set on **a** hill cannot be hid.
15 Neither do men light a candle,	15 Behold, do men light a candle
and put it under a bushel,	and put it under a bushel?
but on a candlestick;	Nay, but on a candlestick,
and it giveth light	and it giveth light
unto all that are in the house.	to all that are in the house;
16 Let your light so shine	16 therefore let your light so shine
before men,	before this people,
that they may see your good works,	that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in heaven.	and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.
17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets:	17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets.

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.	I am not come to destroy but to fulfil:
18 For verily I say unto you,	18 for verily I say unto you,
Till heaven and earth pass,	
one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass	one jot nor one tittle hath not passed away
from the law,	from the law,
till all be fulfilled.	but in me it hath all been fulfilled.
19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments,	19 And behold I have given unto you the law and the commandments of my Father,
and shall teach men so,	that ye shall believe in me,
he shall be called the least	and that ye shall repent of your sins,
in the kingdom of heaven:	and come unto me
but whosoever shall do and teach *them*,	with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.
the same shall be called great	Behold, ye have the commandments before
in the kingdom of heaven.	you, and the law is fulfilled;
20	20 therefore come unto me and be ye saved;
For I say unto you, That except	for verily I say unto you, that except
your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees,	ye shall keep my commandments, which I have commanded you at this time,
ye shall in no case	ye shall in no case
enter into the kingdom of heaven.	enter into the kingdom of heaven.
21 Ye have heard that it was said	21 Ye have heard that it hath been said
by them of old time,	by them of old time,
	and it is also written before you, that
Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill	thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill,
shall be in danger of the judgment:	shall be in danger of the judgment of God.
22 But I say unto you,	22 But I say unto you,
That whosoever is angry with his brother	that whosoever is angry with his brother,
without a cause	
shall be in danger of the judgment:	shall be in danger of his judgment.
and whosoever shall say to his brother,	And whosoever shall say to his brother,
Raca, shall be in danger of the council:	Raca, shall be in danger of the council;
but whosoever shall say,	and whosoever shall say,
Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.	Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire;
23 Therefore if thou	23 therefore, if ye
bring thy gift to the altar,	shall come unto me,
	or shall desire to come unto me,
and there rememberest that thy brother	and rememberest that thy brother
hath **ought** against thee;	hath **aught** against thee,
24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way;	24 Go thy way unto thy brother, and
first be reconciled to thy brother,	first be reconciled to thy brother,
and then come	and then come
	unto me with full purpose of heart,
and offer thy gift.	and I will receive you.
25 Agree with thine adversary quickly,	25 Agree with thine adversary quickly,
whiles thou art in the way with him;	**while** thou art in the way with him,
lest at any time	lest at any time
the adversary deliver thee to the judge,	
and the judge deliver thee to the officer,	he shall get thee,
and thou be cast into prison.	and thou shalt be cast into prison.
26 Verily I say unto thee,	26 Verily[e] I say unto thee,
Thou shalt by no means come out thence,	thou shalt by no means come out thence
till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.	until thou hast paid the uttermost senine.
	—And while ye are in prison

	can ye pay even one senine?
	Verily, verily, I say unto you, Nay.
27 Ye have heard that	27 Behold,
it was said by them of old time,	it is written by them of old time, that
Thou shalt not commit adultery:	thou shalt not commit adultery;
28 But I say unto you,	28 But I say unto you,
That whosoever looketh on a woman	that whosoever looketh on a woman,
to lust after her hath committed adultery	to lust after her, hath committed adultery
with her already in his heart.	already in his heart.
29 And if thy right eye offend thee,	29 Behold, I give unto you a commandment,
pluck it out, and cast it from thee:	that ye suffer none of these things
for it is profitable for thee	to enter into your heart:
that one of thy members should perish,	
and not that thy whole body	
should be cast into hell.	
30 And if thy right hand offend thee,	
cut it off, and cast it from thee:	
for it is profitable for thee	30 For it is better that ye
that one of thy members should perish,	should deny yourselves of these things,
and not that thy whole body	wherein ye will take up your cross,
	than that ye
should be cast into hell.	should be cast into hell.
31 It hath been said,	31 It hath been written,
Whosoever shall put away his wife,	That whosoever shall put away his wife,
let him give her a writing of divorcement:	let him give her a writing of divorcement.
32 But I say unto you,	32 Verily, verily I say unto you,
That whosoever shall put away his wife,	That whosoever shall put away his wife,
saving for the cause of fornication,	saving for the cause of fornication,
causeth her to commit adultery:	causeth her to commit adultery;
and whosoever shall marry her	and whoso shall marry her
that is divorced committeth adultery.	who is divorced, committeth adultery.
33 Again, ye have heard that it	33 And again it
hath been said by them of old time,	is written,
Thou shalt not forswear thyself,	Thou shalt not forswear thyself,
but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:	but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.
34 But I say unto you,	34 But verily, verily I say unto you,
Swear not at all;	Swear not at all;
neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:	neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne;
35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool:	35 Nor by the earth, for it is[f] his footstool;
neither by Jerusalem;	
for it is the city of the great King.	
36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head,	36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head,
because thou canst not make one hair	because thou canst not make one hair
white or black.	black or white;
37 But let your communication be,	37 But let your communication be
Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever	Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever
is more than these cometh of evil.	cometh of more than these are[g] evil.
38 Ye have heard that it hath been said,	38 And behold, it is written,
An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:	An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;
39 But I say unto you,	39 But I say unto you,
That ye resist not evil:	that ye shall not resist evil:
but whosoever shall smite thee	but whosoever shall smite thee
on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.	on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.
40 And if any man will sue thee at the law,	40 And if any man will sue thee at the law,

and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* **cloke** also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. 43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. 6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. 5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing	and take away thy coat, let him have thy **cloak** also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and to[h] him that would borrow of thee, turn thou not away. 43 And behold, it is written also, That thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; 44 but behold I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; 46 therefore those things which were of old time, which were under the law in me,[i] are all fulfilled. 47 —Old things are done away, and all things have become new; 48 therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. 13:1 Verily, verily, I say that I would that ye should do alms unto the poor; but take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore, when ye shall do your alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as will hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; 4 that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly. 5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not do as the hypocrites: for they love to pray standing

in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. 16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint **thine** head, and wash thy face; 18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. 19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves	in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy will be done in[j] earth as it is in heaven. 11 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 12 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. 13 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 14 For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. 16 Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward. 17 But thou, when thou fastest,[k] anoint **thy** head, and wash thy face; 18 That thou appear not unto men, to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. 19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves

treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness! 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.	treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. 25 And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words he looked upon the twelve whom he had chosen, and said unto them: Remember the words which I have spoken. For behold, ye are they whom I have chosen to minister unto this people.
25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall* he not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:)	Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; 29 and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, even so will he clothe you, if ye are not of little faith. 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed?

for your heavenly Father knoweth	32 For your heavenly Father knoweth
that ye have need of all these things.	that ye have need of all these things.
33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God,	33 —But seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and his righteousness;	and his righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you.	and all these things shall be added unto you.
34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow:	34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow:
for the morrow shall take thought for the	for the morrow shall take thought for the
things of itself.	things of itself.
Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.	Sufficient is the day unto the evil thereof.
	14:1 And now it came to pass that when
	Jesus had spoken these words he turned
	again to the multitude, and did open his
	mouth unto them again, saying:
	Verily, verily, I say unto you,
1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.	Judge not, that ye be not judged.
2 For with what **judgment** ye judge,	2 For with what **judgement** ye judge,
ye shall be judged:	ye shall be judged:
and with what measure ye mete,	and with what measure ye mete,
it shall be measured to you again.	it shall be measured to you again.
3 And why beholdest thou the mote	3 And why beholdest thou the mote
that is in thy brother's eye,	that is in thy brother's eye,
but considerest not the beam	but considerest not the beam
that is in thine own eye?	that is in thine own eye?
4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother,	4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother,
Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye;	Let me pull out[l] the mote out of thine eye;
and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?	and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?
5 Thou hypocrite,	5 Thou hypocrite,
first cast out the beam out of thine own eye;	first cast out the beam out of thine own eye;
and then shalt thou see clearly	and then shalt thou see clearly
to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.	to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.
6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,	6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,
neither cast ye your pearls before swine,	neither cast ye your pearls before swine,
lest they trample them under their feet,	lest they trample them under their feet,
and turn again and rend you.	and turn again and rend you.
7 Ask, and it shall be given you;	7 Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
seek, and ye shall find;	seek, and ye shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened unto you:	knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
8 For every one that asketh receiveth;	8 For every one that asketh, receiveth;
and he that seeketh findeth;	and he that seeketh, findeth;
and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.	and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.
9 Or what man is there of you,	9 Or what man is there of you,
whom if his son ask bread,	whom, if his son ask bread,
will he give him a stone?	will he[m] give him a stone?
10 Or if he ask a fish,	10 Or if he ask a fish,
will he give him a serpent?	will he give him a serpent?
11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give	11 If ye then being evil know how to give
good gifts unto your children, how much	good gifts unto your children, how much
more shall your Father which is in heaven	more shall your Father which is in heaven
give good things to them that ask him?	give good things to them that ask him?
12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would	12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would
that men should do to you,	that men should do to you,
do ye even so to them:	do ye even so to them:
for this is the law and the prophets.	for this is the law and the prophets.
13 Enter ye in at the strait gate:	13 Enter ye in at the strait[n] gate;

for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way,	for wide is the gate, and broad is the way,
that leadeth to destruction,	that° leadeth to destruction,
and many there be which go in thereat:	and many there be which go in thereat:
14 Because strait *is* the gate,	14 because, strait is the gate,
and narrow *is* the way,	and narrow is the way,
which leadeth unto life,	which leadeth unto life,
and few there be that find it.	and few there be that find it.
15 Beware of false prophets,	15 Beware of false prophets,
which come to you in sheep's clothing,	which come to you in sheep's clothing,
but inwardly they are ravening wolves.	but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
16 Ye shall know them by their fruits.	16 Ye shall know them by their fruits:
Do men gather grapes of thorns,	Do men gather grapes of thorns,
or figs of thistles?	or figs of thistles?
17 Even so every good tree	17 Even so every good tree
bringeth forth good fruit;	bringeth forth good fruit;
but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.	but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.
18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,	18 —A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,
neither *can* a corrupt tree	neither a corrupt tree
bring forth good fruit.	bring forth good fruit.
19 Every tree that bringeth not forth	19 Every tree that bringeth not forth
good fruit is hewn down,	good fruit, is hewn down,
and cast into the fire.	and cast into the fire.
20 Wherefore	20 Wherefore,
by their fruits ye shall know them.	by their fruits ye shall know them.
21 Not every one that saith unto me,	21 Not every one that saith unto me
Lord, Lord,	Lord, Lord,
shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;	shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;
but he that doeth	but he that doeth
the will of my Father which is in heaven.	the will of my Father which is in heaven.
22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord,	22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord,
Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?	Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?
and in thy name have cast out devils? and in	and in thy name have cast out devils? and in
thy name done many wonderful works?	thy name done many wonderful works?
23 And then will I profess unto them,	23 And then will I profess unto them,
I never knew you:	I never knew you;
depart from me, ye that work iniquity.	depart from me, ye that work iniquity.
24 Therefore whosoever heareth	24 Therefore, whoso heareth
these sayings of mine, and doeth them,	these sayings of mine, and doeth them,
I will liken him unto a wise man,	I will liken him unto a wise man,
which built his house upon a rock:	which built his house upon a rock:
25 And the rain descended,	25 and the rain descended,
and the floods came, and the winds blew,	and the floods came, and the winds blew,
and beat upon that house; and it fell not:	and beat upon that house; and it fell not:
for it was founded upon a rock.	for it was founded upon a rock.
26 And every one that heareth	26 And every one that heareth
these sayings of mine, and doeth them not,	these sayings of mine, and doeth them not,
shall be likened unto a foolish man,	shall be likened unto a foolish man,
which built his house upon the sand:	which built his house upon the sand:
27 And the rain descended,	27 and the rain descended,
and the floods came, and the winds blew,	and the floods came, and the winds blew,
and beat upon that house; and it fell:	and beat upon that house; and it fell:
and great was the fall of it.	and great was the fall of it.

NOTES

a. In 22 places in the ST, the word *which* is changed to *who* in later editions, despite the fact that the original reading agreed with the KJV (3 Ne. 12:2 [*bis*], 3, 6, 10, 12, 16, 44, 45, 48; 13:1, 3, 6 [*bis*], 9, 18 [*bis*]; 14:11, 15, 21, 24, 26).

b. The line "which cometh unto me" (3 Ne. 12:3) erroneously used a singular verb form, so later editions were changed to use the plural verb form "come" instead.

c. 3 Nephi 12:10 read "namesake" in the 1830 edition and "names-sake" in the 1837 edition, but clearly the meaning was "name's sake," as it was corrected to say in the 1840 edition. P shows that the scribe (Oliver Cowdery) began writing the word *sake* after the word *my*, wrote the letter *n* over the *s*, then finished the word *name* followed by the word *sake.* Thus P originally said *name sake*, which the printer evidently read as the one word *namesake.* At some point the possessive ending *'s* was inserted in the line (see Skousen ed. 2001b, 817). The original reading of P, rather than the 1830 or corrected 1840 reading, is followed here.

d. In 3 Nephi 12:12, the original reading was "exceeding," in agreement with the KJV; later editions conformed the word to proper adverbial form, "exceedingly."

e. In 3 Nephi 12:26, P has only one "verily" whereas the 1830 edition has a second one. Skousen shows that the ST generally has the doubled "verily, verily" where Matthew has no "verily" at all (in at least six of eight occurrences, probably seven), but does not add a second "verily" where Matthew already has one. Therefore, the second "verily" should probably be omitted here. For the same reason, the second "verily" is probably correct in 3 Nephi 12:34 (Skousen 2008, 3370-74).

f. The 1830 edition omitted the word *is* in 3 Nephi 12:35 ("for it his footstool"), but the word is present in P and should be accepted, as it was in subsequent editions (Skousen 2008, 3375).

g. P and all of the early editions read "are evil" in 3 Nephi 12:37; recent editions changed this to "is evil" for the sake of subject-verb grammatical agreement (Skousen 2008, 3376-77).

h. 3 Nephi 12:42 read "and to him that would borrow" until 1920, when the text was corrected to "and from him that would borrow," in conformity with the KJV and the sense of the text. Skousen argues in favour of the revision even though he agrees "to him" was probably the wording of O (Skousen 2008, 3377-78). *Contra*

Skousen, the text of P and all of the early editions is followed here.

i. The 1830, 1837, and 1840 editions of 3 Nephi 12:46 all read, "which were under the law in me, are all fulfilled." Later editions moved the comma to what seems a more sensible place, "which were under the law, in me are all fulfilled." Since neither O (which is not extant) nor P had punctuation, the punctuation appearing in all three of the editions overseen by Joseph Smith is followed here (*contra* Skousen 2009, 600).

j. 3 Nephi 13:10 originally read "in earth" (O, 1830 ed.); Joseph Smith changed it to "on earth" for the 1837 edition (Skousen 2008, 3381-82).

k. 3 Nephi 13:17 in P read "thou fasteth," which is grammatically incorrect; it was changed to "thou fastest," in agreement with the KJV. In this case the error is likely to have been scribal, and Joseph's correction in the 1830 edition is followed here (as per Skousen 2008, 3383).

l. The 1837 edition at 3 Nephi 14:4 changed "Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye" (O, 1830 ed., and KJV) to "Let me pull the mote out of thine eye." Likewise 14:5 was changed from "cast out" to "cast" (twice). The table retains the original form of the text.

m. P and all of the early editions had "whom" and "will he give him" in 3 Nephi 14:9; later editions changed "whom" to "who" and omitted the word "he" (Skousen 2008, 3389-90).

n. The 1830, 1837, and 1840 editions of the Book of Mormon all had the word "straight" at 3 Nephi 14:13, 14. However, the printer's manuscript had "strait," the word also found in the KJV (Skousen 2008, 3390-91).

o. P and the early editions at 3 Nephi 14:13 agree with the KJV, "that lead to destruction"; in later editions "that" was changed to "which" (Skousen 2008, 3391).

7.1.2 Statistical Comparisons of the Texts of the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple

Before discussing specific text-critical issues in the ST, it is important to have a clear perception of the general facts pertaining to the relationship of the ST to the SM as a whole, and specifically of its relationship to the KJV.

There are 107 verses and 2,440 words in Matthew 5:3-7:27 KJV (excluding narrative text in 5:1-2; 7:28-29). There are 107½ verses and 2,650 words in 3 Nephi 12:1b-14:27 (excluding narrative text in 12:1a; 13:25a; 14:1a). The ST is 210 words longer than the SM, or 8.6%. If one begins with the first parallel saying and counts only 3 Nephi 12:3-14:27 (omitting the 158-word opening two verses of the ST), the parallel section of the ST is only about 2% longer than the SM.

The ST omits material in three places in Matthew 5 (Matt. 5:19-20, 29-30, 45b-47) but has different material located in the same places. These three passages are the only units of more than one verse, or of 20 or more words, that are in the SM but are missing in the ST. In all three instances the ST text is roughly comparable in length to the SM text in the same place. The longest string of words in Matthew 6-7 that is not found in the corresponding passage in the ST (3 Ne. 13-14) is only nine words long ("For after all these things do the Gentiles seek," Matt. 6:32).

The above facts demonstrate beyond controversy that the ST is, in some sense, an alternate version of the same speech known as the SM. In what sense this is the case may be defined more precisely on the basis of additional considerations discussed in the rest of this chapter.

Although the finding that the ST is another version of the SM is not controversial, conservative Mormons may consider controversial the claim that the ST is dependent on the KJV. A preliminary step toward assessing that claim is to gauge the extent to which the ST as a whole matches the wording of the SM in the KJV. The SM contains 294 words not found in the ST (294 / 2,440 = 12.0%), while the ST contains 500 words not found in the SM (500 / 2,650 = 18.9%). These figures include both simple omissions as well as substitutions. They do not count words in different forms (e.g., *is* rather than *are*, *whoso* rather than *whosoever*) or words that have been transposed or moved (colour-coded in blue; 50 words in the SM, or 2.0%, and 54 words in the ST, or 2.0%). Counting these variant forms, 344 words of the 2,440 words of the SM (86%) are not found in the ST. As high as this percentage is, it does not tell the whole story. Almost all of the words in the SM that are not found in the ST have nothing to do with translation. Rather, they represent content of the SM that is simply omitted in the ST. Most of the omitted material comes from just four units of material in Matthew 5; 187 of the 294 words of the SM not in the ST are in those four units (Matt. 5:19-20, 29-30, 35b, 45b-47). That is, excluding these four

units that have no parallel at all in the ST, only 157 of the remaining 2,253 words in the SM—just 4.7%—are not in the ST in the exact same forms. To state the matter positively, excluding large units of material that are omitted in the ST, the ST reproduces 93 per cent of the exact words of the KJV translation of the SM.

  Another perspective that is even more telling is to examine the verbal parallels dynamically by comparing them across the three chapters (see Table 42). What this analysis shows is that the differences between the SM (in the KJV) and the ST are found almost entirely in Matthew 5. Whereas 3 Nephi 12 has only 71% of the exact words in Matthew 5, 3 Nephi 13 has over 95% of the exact words in Matthew 6 and 3 Nephi 14 has 99.7% of the exact words in Matthew 7. If one counts the unique words (those with no parallel in the other text and those in which different words appear in the same place in the two texts), about 90% of the unique words of the SM are found in Matthew 5 and about the same percentage for the ST in 3 Nephi. Thus, while some doubt might be entertained as to whether 3 Nephi 12 is dependent on the KJV, there can be little such doubt for 3 Nephi 13 and no doubt at all for 3 Nephi 14.

Table 42. Word Counts of the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at the Temple								
	Sermon on the Mount (Matt.)				Sermon at the Temple (3 Ne.)			
	Mt5	Mt6	Mt7	Totals	3Ne12	3Ne13	3Ne14	Totals
Total words	1052	793	595	**2440**	1240	809	601	**2650**
Identical words (count)	747	756	593	**2096**	747	756	593	**2096**
Identical words (percent)	71.0	95.3	99.7	**85.9**	60.2	93.4	98.7	**79.1**
Changes in form (blue)	38	11	1	**50**	42	11	1	**54**
Unparalleled (green, red)	248	26	1	**275**	424	42	7	**473**
Different words (brown)	19	0	0	**19**	27	0	0	**27**
Unique words (count)	267	26	1	**294**	451	42	7	**500**
Unique words (percent)	25.4	3.3	0.2	**12.0**	36.4	5.2	1.2	**18.9**
Percent of unique words	90.8	8.9	0.3	**(100)**	90.2	8.4	1.4	**(100)**

The evidence for the verbal dependence of the ST on the KJV is quite similar to the evidence for the verbal dependence of the Book of Mormon's Isaiah quotations on the KJV (see §6.5.6). In both cases, the Book of Mormon presents a somewhat expanded version of the passages quoted from the Bible. In both cases, words are added, omitted, altered, and replaced, with the additions constituting the most notable differences. Where the Book of Mormon versions of the biblical material do not materially add or subtract substantive content, the wording matches that of the KJV to better than 99 per cent.

The italicized words in the KJV do not play a significant role in the addition or subtraction of substantive context in the ST. However, they do correlate significantly with single-word differences between parallel sayings in the SM and the ST. A "single-word difference" is defined here as an occurrence in which one word in the SM text is absent from the corresponding ST text, one word in the ST text is absent from the corresponding SM text, or one word in the SM text is replaced with one word or word unit (such as *shall be*) in the ST text. There are some 35 single-word differences between the SM and the ST, of which 10 are associated with words italicized in the KJV. These 10 differences are all found in the Beatitudes and in 3 Nephi 13-14 (Matt. 6-7). Thus, of the 15 single-word differences in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12 / 3 Ne. 12:3-12), 7 are associated with italicized words; of the 7 single-word differences in the second and third chapters (Matt. 6-7 / 3 Ne. 13-14), 3 are associated with italicized words. In 3 Nephi 12:13-48, where the most substantial differences with the SM all appear, *no* changes are associated with italicized words. This evidence supports the inference that the author of 3 Nephi based the ST on the SM as it appears in the KJV: where he engaged in heavy editing of the SM, the italicized words in the KJV played no part, but where his revisions of the SM were comparatively light, those light revisions were correlated to a significant extent with the italicized words.

The statistical analysis presented in this section has confirmed the literary dependence of the ST on the SM as it appears in the KJV. Given the fact, for example, that over 99 per cent of the words in the KJV of Matthew 5 appear in 3 Nephi 14, the conclusion of literary dependence on the KJV should be regarded as nearly certain. Any assessment of the text-critical evidence should take this broader statistical evidence into account.

7.1.3 Conjectural Emendations in the Sermon on the Mount and the Text of the Sermon at the Temple

In the chapter treating critical issues in the SM, attention was given briefly to various conjectural emendations that scholars have proposed with regard to the Greek text of the SM (§5.1.2). These include the suggestion that Matthew 5:3 originally said "for they shall be made rich," that Matthew 6:28 said "beat (flax)" instead of "toil," that "what is valuable" (*timion*) was misread as "what is holy" (*hagion*) in Matthew 7:6, and that Matthew 6:5 originally read "in the agora" instead of "in the synagogues." This study followed David Alan Black (1989) in viewing all such conjectural emendations as unlikely to represent valid corrections to the text of the SM.

It is worth noting that the ST does not agree with *any* of the seventeen or so conjectural emendations scholars have proposed for the text of the SM. That is, in no instance have scholars proposed that a reading not found in any of the extant Greek manuscripts of the SM and that happens to agree with the Book of Mormon should be accepted. This means that such conjectural emendations have no relevance in any comparison of the ST to the Greek text of the SM.

7.1.4 Text-Critically Significant Agreements with the King James Version

Most of the differences between the SM and the ST have nothing to do with differences in translations of the original texts of the two works (speaking hypothetically of the Book of Mormon's supposed ancient text in Reformed Egyptian). The Book of Mormon's omission of the words "and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (3 Ne. 12:45, cf. Matt. 5:45) obviously cannot be the result of differences in translation. One must posit either that the original text of 3 Nephi differed from Matthew at this point or that the modern author of 3 Nephi omitted the line (either accidentally or intentionally).

The manuscript tradition of the New Testament (NT) provides no examples of copies of Matthew that agree with the Book of Mormon in the case of the difference just cited in 3 Nephi 12:45. Most such differences with the KJV (and with other

English versions), in fact, do not have any support from ancient or medieval manuscripts in Greek or in the other versions. This is an important point that will be treated in more detail in the next section (§7.1.5).

The issue to be considered in this section is the presence of verbal agreements of the ST with the KJV where the KJV wording is problematic for text-critical reasons. An earlier part of this study (§5.1.4 and §5.1.5) gave an overview of variants in the Greek text of the SM that might affect either translation or meaning (or both). Over forty such variants were listed, each having enough manuscript support to merit the attention of critical editions of the Greek NT and of commentaries on the text (Table 15). In about half of these, the reading followed in the KJV and by the ST in the Book of Mormon is generally accepted by all or nearly all textual critics (these occur in Matt. 5:4-5, 11, 22; 6:2, 7, 8, 10, 14, 22, 24; 7:11, 12, 13, 19, 21b, 22, 23, 27). In three instances the reading followed in the KJV and the ST is controversial but there is insufficient evidence on which to base a definite conclusion on the matter. These include the word *pseudomai* ("falsely") in Matthew 5:11, the words *e ti piēte* ("or what to drink") in Matthew 6:25, and *tou theou* ("of God") in Matthew 6:33. This leaves about fifteen places in the ST where it agrees with the KJV and in doing so follows a reading that most textual critics today regard as secondary (see Table 43).

John Welch is the LDS scholar who has given the most attention to this problem of the ST agreeing with textually secondary readings in the KJV. He acknowledged that in some instances the wording found in both the KJV and the ST does reflect secondary variants of the Greek text, but he maintained that this does not matter because the variants do not affect the meaning of the passage in significant ways. For example, he admitted that "the best early manuscripts" of Matthew 5:27 "do not contain the words *tois archaiois* ('by them of old time')," but suggested that they are implied because the same expression is used in 5:21 to identify the same people (Welch 1999, 202). He agreed that the older manuscripts at Matthew 7:2 have the verb *metrēthēsetai* without the prefix *anti-* ("again") reflected in the KJV and in 3 Nephi 14:2, but commented, "With or without this prefix on the verb, the sentence means exactly the same thing" (204). Welch offered similar arguments with regard to the use of "cast" (*blēthē*) instead of "go away" (*apelthē*) in Matthew 5:30 and the three occurrences of "openly" (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18; 3 Ne. 13:4, 6,

18). "Accordingly, even though the Book of Mormon text does not differ in these spots from the King James Version of the Bible, the Sermon at the Temple still presents readers with a clear and appropriate translation of the essential meaning of these passages" (202).

Table 43. Textually Unlikely Readings Followed in the Sermon at the Temple			
Matt.	3 Ne.	KJV/Book of Mormon	Preferred Reading
5:27	12:27	"by them of old time" (*tois archaiois*)	[omit]
5:30	12:30	"should be cast" (*blēthē*)	"should go away" (*apelthē*)
5:32	12:32	"whosoever shall put away" (*hos an apolusē*)	"everyone who divorces" (*pas ho apoluōn*)
5:44	12:44	"Love your enemies, **bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,** and pray for them **which despitefully use you and** persecute you."	"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"
5:48	12:48	"your Father which is in heaven [*ho en tois ouranois*]"	"your heavenly [*ouranios*] Father"
6:1	13:1	"alms" (*eleēmosunēn*)	"righteousness" (*dikaiosunēn*)
6:4	13:4	"thy Father which seeth in secret **himself** [*autos*] shall reward thee"	"your Father who sees in secret shall reward you"
6:4, 6, 18	13:4, 6, 18	"openly [*en tō phanerō*]"	[omit]
6:12	13:11	"as we **forgive** [*aphiemen*] our debtors"	"as we **have forgiven** [*aphēkamen*] our debtors"
6:13b	13:13	"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."	[omit]
6:15a	13:15a	"But if ye forgive not men **their trespasses** [*ta paraptōmata autōn*]"	"But if you do not forgive people" [omit "their trespasses"]
7:2	14:2	"it **shall be measured** to you **again** [**anti***metrēthēsetai*]"	"it **shall be measured** to you" [*metrēthēsetai*]
7:24	14:24	"I will liken him" (*homoiōsō auton*)	"will be likened" (*homoiōthēsetai*)

Unfortunately, Welch's defence simply misses the nature of the text-critical problem. The problem is not that these secondary variants all misrepresent the meaning of the text. In most cases they do not. The problem is that they provide further confirmation of the dependence of the Book of Mormon on the KJV. This evidence shows that Joseph Smith dictated the text of the ST from the KJV, not from the gold plates or from the seer stone in his hat. This is made especially clear by (a) the large number of these agreements with secondary readings in the KJV and (b) by the longer secondary readings in Matthew 5:44 and 6:13b that are translated in the KJV and repeated verbatim from the KJV in the ST (3 Ne. 12:44; 13:13). That the ST agrees verbally with the KJV in such instances might be dismissed as

coincidence if it happened only a few times and only with expressions of one or a few words. As it stands, however, the textual evidence simply cannot be explained away in that fashion. It shows definitively that the Book of Mormon was literarily dependent on the wording of the KJV.

There is one instance where the ST follows the KJV wording and as a result the functional meaning of the text is arguably altered: the doxology at the end of what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:13b; 3 Ne. 13:13). LDS scholar Thomas Wayment has admitted that "it can be tentatively concluded that the Lord's Prayer lacked the lacked the longer ending" and that the doxology was added later (Wayment 2010, 307). Welch did not address the text-critical problem as such but pointed out (citing NT scholar Joachim Jeremias) that Jewish liturgical prayers in the first century normally ended with some sort of doxology. He inferred from this premise that Jesus probably ended the prayer with a doxology (Welch 1999, 206-207). The hidden premise of Welch's argument, however, is that Jesus intended "the Lord's Prayer" as a liturgical prayer. Since the better manuscripts of Matthew do not have the doxology, and since the parallel version of the prayer in Luke 11:2-4 does not contain any doxology (about which there is no doubt in terms of the manuscript evidence), the proper inference is that Jesus was not presenting a prayer composed for liturgical use. Once Christians began adapting the prayer for corporate worship, they naturally added a doxology to it.

The context in which Matthew presents the Lord's Prayer strikingly confirms the point just made. In the immediately preceding unit of discourse, Matthew has just quoted Jesus instructing his disciples to pray "in secret" (Matt. 6:6). The point here is not that Jesus opposed all public, corporate prayer, but that he emphasized that prayer was to be first and foremost a private matter between the individual and God. In this context one would not expect a formal, liturgical prayer—and according to the manuscript evidence, the prayer lacks the formal doxological ending that was a regular feature of Jewish liturgical prayers. Thus, in appending the doxology to the prayer, later manuscripts and versions of Matthew were subtly changing the function or purpose of the prayer in the context of the SM. The Book of Mormon follows suit—demonstrating its fallible dependence on the KJV.

7.1.5 Text-Critically Significant Departures from the King James Version

In contrast to the fifteen or so places where the ST agrees with the KJV in following a form of the Greek text that most scholars judge to be secondary, there is *one* place where the ST departs from the KJV in agreement with the better reading. In the ST, Jesus is quoted as saying "that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of his [God's] judgment" (3 Ne. 12:22). In the KJV, on the other hand, Jesus is quoted in the SM as saying "that whosoever is angry with his brother **without a cause** shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. 5:22, emphasis added). Here the words "without a cause" translate a single, short word, *eikē*, which is not found in the earlier, better manuscripts of Matthew, notably P64 (ca. AD 200) and the fourth-century codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. As explained in an earlier part of this study (§5.1.6), the text-critical argument for omitting the word is fairly decisive and should be accepted. In this one instance, then, the ST in the Book of Mormon reflects a more accurate text of the SM than does the KJV. The question remains as to what significance this fact has.

According to John Welch, this variant stands apart from all of the places in which the ST follows the inferior readings found in the KJV because, he argued, the addition of "without a cause" weakens the moral demand of Jesus' saying. In Welch's view, the addition, by permitting "justifiable" anger, "offers the disciple a convenient loophole of self-justification or rationalization." Welch claimed that "this textual difference in the Greek manuscripts of the Sermon on the Mount is the only variant that has a significant impact on meaning… The removal of *without a cause* has important moral, behavioral, psychological, and religious ramifications, as it is the main place where a significant textual change from the KJV was in fact needed and delivered" (Welch 1999, 201). LDS scholar Thomas Wayment likewise argued that the addition compromises the meaning of the saying (Wayment 2010, 301). Daniel Judd and Allen Stoddard went so far as to assert that the addition of "without a cause" exemplifies Nephi's prophecy in the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 13:26-29) "that the New Testament text would be corrupted and that truths would be lost from the New Testament and from the lives of individuals, families, and the world at large" (Judd and Stoddard 2006, 170).

As explained earlier, however, the addition of *eikē* merely made explicit what was clearly implicit within the context of the Gospel of Matthew and the ministry of Jesus (§5.1.6). The same Jesus who uttered this saying himself became angry with legalistic religious teachers (Mark 3:5) and denounced them harshly (Matt. 23). The addition of *eikē* contributes meaning by making the implicit explicit, but it does not weaken the meaning of the text.

Even if the omission of "without a cause" is not critically important to the meaning of the text, its omission in 3 Nephi 12:22 does reflect the better textual reading of Matthew 5:22. Might this deviation from the KJV, then, be evidence supporting the authenticity of the translation of the Book of Mormon? Mormon scholars have argued that this is the case. According to Welch, "Joseph Smith could hardly have guessed that this phrase did not originally belong in this passage, because textual criticism of the Bible was scarcely in its infancy in America in 1829…. No scholars in the world of Joseph Smith seem to have been even remotely aware of this apparently late insertion in the Greek that actually weakens the text of the Bible" (Welch 2002, 335). LDS apologist Michael Ash, citing Welch in support, concluded that "Joseph Smith got it right, when no scholars in his world would have been aware of the later Greek insertion" (Ash 2008, 46, cf. 48 n. 40).

It is difficult to understand how Welch could make such a statement. In three earlier publications he had defended the view that 3 Nephi 12:22 was evidence for the authenticity of the ST against the text-critical arguments of Stan Larson. Larson had published an article in 1986 on the subject (Larson 1986), to which Welch had responded in the first edition of his book on the Sermon at the Temple (Welch 1990, 145-63). Larson's essay then appeared in revised form in a book (Larson 1993), and Welch updated his rebuttal to Larson in a periodical review (Welch 1994a, 152-68) and in the second edition of his book (Welch 1999, 199-210). Yet Larson had clearly shown that scholars in Joseph Smith's day—and well before his day—were quite aware of the fact that "without a cause" was a later gloss. "The absence of *eike* was known before 1830 when the Book of Mormon appeared, since it was discussed in Desiderius Erasmus, John Mill, Johann Wettsein, Johann Griesbach, and Andreas Birch in reference to the Greek text, not translated in William Tyndale's New Testament from 1526 to 1535, and popularized by various English writers" (Larson 1986, 40; Larson 1993, 128). In the second version of his article, Larson cited Adam

Clarke's commentary on Matthew as an example of a more popular source contemporaneous with Joseph Smith that reflects the same information (Larson 1993, 128).

It is therefore puzzling that Welch would claim, in an essay published in 2002, that "no scholars in the world of Joseph Smith seem to have been even remotely aware" of the textual issue (Welch 2002, 335). Such a claim is simply false. Judd and Stoddard listed several English versions preceding Joseph Smith's day that omitted the words, including the Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, and Douay-Rheims versions (Judd and Stoddard 2006, 166). Evangelical scholar Ron Huggins has shown that the point was made not only by Adam Clarke but also by John Wesley in his commentary on the Bible (Huggins 2003, 170-78).

Those Mormon scholars who have acknowledged that the secondary character of "without a cause" was known before Joseph Smith have typically argued that Joseph would not have had access to such arcane, scholarly knowledge. For example, Judd and Stoddard stated that "no evidence suggests that Joseph Smith knew of Wesley's work or referred to it while translating the Book of Mormon or the Bible" (Judd and Stoddard 2006, 169-70). Yet Huggins (to whom the authors are responding) provided just such evidence, documenting that Joseph, his family, and his associates were heavily influenced by Methodism and that they clearly had some Methodist books. Huggins also pointed out that it is unnecessary to posit that Joseph took his knowledge of the textual problem at Matthew 5:22 directly from a commentary, as if he were studying such text-critical issues before dictating the passage in the Book of Mormon. "It seems much more likely that Joseph would have acquired information on a variant here and there, in conversation, or by reading or listening to preachers" (Huggins 2003, 177). This is a far more plausible explanation than the hypothesis that Joseph was divinely inspired to restore the original saying at this one point but not inspired to change more than a dozen other places in the SM where the KJV wording represented later glosses.

Welch has rightly noted that the numerous manuscript discoveries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries demonstrated that the earliest Greek text of the SM (and of the rest of the NT) differed little from the text on which the KJV was based. The differences are generally minor, as this study has also argued. The expectation "that the earliest texts of the New Testament would prove radically

different from the traditional manuscripts handed down through the ages" proved false (Welch 1999, 200). Since the manuscript discoveries since the publication of the Book of Mormon confirm the reliability of the Greek text on which the KJV was based, Welch concluded that this fact "speaks generally in favor of the Sermon at the Temple, for one could not have wisely gambled on such confirmation a century and a half ago" (199). This conclusion is a grand *non sequitur* that ignores a basic fact about the ST documented above: it contains five hundred words not found in the SM. That is just the sort of "radical difference" that Welch asserted the manuscript discoveries of the past two centuries have not validated.

Of course, it would be hypothetically possible to explain some of this different material in the ST as material that Jesus chose to include in his sermon to the Nephites even though he had not included it in his Galilean sermon. It might seem difficult to test this explanation, but in fact Joseph Smith provided a simple means of doing so. In March 1831, less than a year after publishing the Book of Mormon, he dictated a "translation" of the SM as part of his project of producing an inspired translation of the Bible (Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews 2004, 58, 64-65). This "translation," which was actually a revision of the KJV done openly with a printed KJV as the base text, is commonly known as the Joseph Smith Translation (JST). The SM in the JST has many of the same differences with the KJV (and with all other versions of the Bible) as the ST, including two lengthy additions and many short, often single-word, additions. The two lengthy additions in common include part of the material introduced before the beginning of the biblical SM (3 Ne. 12:2; Matt. 5:3-4 JST) and an exhortation to avoid sin and take up one's cross (3 Ne. 12:29-30; Matt. 5:31 JST). There are many short additions and some deletions, mostly to the material in Matthew 5; the following are representative examples (changes to the KJV marked):

- "<u>And</u> blessed are <u>all</u> they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled <u>with the Holy Ghost</u>" (3 Ne. 12:6; Matt. 5:8 JST).
- <u>Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be</u> the salt of the earth; but if the salt <u>shall lose its savor</u>, wherewith shall <u>the earth</u> be salted? <u>the salt shall</u> thenceforth <u>be</u> good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (3 Ne. 12:13a; Matt. 5:15a JST).

- "~~You have heard that it was said~~ <u>Behold, it is written</u> by them of old time, <u>that</u> thou shalt not commit adultery" (3 Ne. 12:27; Matt. 5:29 JST).

At least in such places where the ST and the JST of the SM agree verbatim, one must infer that the two texts are purporting to give a literal translation of Jesus' words on those two separate occasions. This presumption seems especially justified where the texts appear to be correcting the KJV ("it is written" instead of "you have heard that it was said") or adding new content ("with the Holy Ghost").

7.1.6 Textual Criticism and the Dependence of the Sermon at the Temple on the King James Version

Welch was correct in saying that Joseph took a gamble by issuing a supposedly inspired translation of Jesus' sermon—not once, but twice—though not for the reason Welch gave. Joseph presumed that whatever manuscript evidence existed would not overturn the scepticism already spreading in his day that the books of the Bible had not been faithfully preserved in the copies of copies that had survived the centuries. The conventional wisdom of his day was that much of the original text had been lost or suppressed over those centuries, a conventional view he wrote into the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 13:26-29). On the basis of that popular belief it seemed plausible to claim that an inspired translation of a passage from the Bible, or a passage from another book reproducing the same sermon, might look very different in places, and in particular would be *longer* than the received version.

Joseph Smith's seemingly reasonable presumption was in fact overturned by the manuscript discoveries of the next two centuries. What scholars discovered was that the SM was originally a bit *shorter* than the traditional text, which included some material that scribes had added sometime after Matthew was originally written (notably in Matt. 5:44; 6:13b). They also discovered that nothing was missing in the traditional, medieval text of the SM; the main defects, other than the two additions just mentioned, were minor glosses of a word or two here and there (Matt. 5:27; 6:4, 6, 15a, 18) and minor verbal substitutions in a few places (Matt. 5:30, 32, 48; 6:1, 12; 7:2, 24), typically different forms of the same words (see above, Table 43). *Not one word* of the five hundred words the ST added to the sermon has been validated by a single manuscript discovery since the publication of the Book of Mormon. On the other hand, of the 294 words in the SM omitted in the ST, only the omission

three-word phrase "without a cause" (Matt. 5:22; 3 Ne. 12:22) is supported by the manuscript evidence—and that variant has been known since at least the fourth century (Judd and Stoddard 2006, 163).

In the course of his critique of Stan Larson's text-critical analysis of the ST, Welch argued that Larson's study wrongly assumed a simple relationship between the ST and the SM. Matthew presents a Greek translation of Jesus' Aramaic sermon in Galilee. There are different ways in Greek of rendering the same Aramaic wording, and Matthew's translation of Jesus' Aramaic might not have been a strictly word-for-word rendition. The Book of Mormon, on the other hand, presents "Mormon's transcription" of an earlier record by the first-century Nephi of Jesus' sermon to the Nephites. They are two different sermons, given at different places in different circumstances, and recorded in different languages (Welch 1994a, 153-54).

TABLE 44. ORIGINS OF THE TEXTS OF THE TWO SERMONS		
	Sermon on the Mount	**Sermon at the Temple**
When spoken	Early in Jesus' pre-crucifixion ministry (AD 30)	Shortly after Jesus' ascension (AD 34)
Where spoken	Galilee	Somewhere in the Americas
Original audience	Galilean Jews	Nephites
Original language of speech	Aramaic	Unknown language of Hebrew/Egyptian origins
Original language of written text	first-century *koinē* Greek	Unknown language of Hebrew/Egyptian origins
Date of final composition of written text	ca. AD 50-80	ca. AD 385
Author of written text	Matthew	Mormon
Basis of translation	Medieval Greek manuscripts of the NT	Gold plates inscribed by Mormon
English version	King James Version (1611)	Book of Mormon (1830)
Translators	English scholars	Joseph Smith

Welch might have added here that the language of the first-century Nephites would not have been Aramaic. Presumably Jesus would have spoken to the Nephites in their language, one that had its origins in pre-exilic Hebrew (with some Egyptian influence, according to the Book of Mormon) but would have been as different from that language as contemporary English is from that of Chaucer. In turn Mormon's version was supposedly written in a form of that unknown Hebrew-based language but in reformed Egyptian characters. Thus, taking the Book of Mormon's

claims at face value, the two sermons would have had very different histories indeed (see Table 44).

Welch went on to infer that there is no reason to expect two English translations of these two texts to be verbally identical at any point. This means, he concluded, that textual criticism cannot be used to test the historicity of the Book of Mormon (Welch 1994a, 154). This would be a fine argument except that the two English texts *are* verbally identical far more often than not. Welch's observations about the differences between the SM and the ST, intended to rule out of court the use of textual criticism in critiquing the ST, are actually powerful evidence of the dependence of the ST on the SM as it appears in the KJV. This is because those differences between the two sermons are such that one would have every reason to expect that their English translations would *rarely* be verbally identical. Yet in most places, especially in 3 Nephi 13-14, the wording is identical. In Matthew 7 and 3 Nephi 14, beginning with the words "Judge not" and running to the end of the two texts, the latter varies from the former in only three words out of 595 words: adding "unto" (3 Ne. 14:7), omitting "can" (14:18), and using "whoso" instead of "whosoever" (14:24). This high degree of verbal correspondence between the two texts should not be if the ST text originated in the way that the Book of Mormon indicates.

The evidence from textual criticism gains its relevance precisely because the ST is so verbally similar to the SM. The agreements of the text of the ST with so many of the secondary readings reflected in the KJV demonstrate that the transmission history of the Greek NT text from the first to the early seventeenth century is reflected in the Book of Mormon. So, for example, in 3 Nephi 14, none of the three verbal differences from Matthew 7 just noted reflects an earlier form of the Greek text. Instead at least two secondary variants in the Greek text followed in the KJV ("it shall be measured to you again," Matt. 7:2; "I will liken him," 7:24) are also reflected in the parallel sayings in 3 Nephi (14:2, 24). Or consider 3 Nephi 13:11-24, which repeats 279 of the 280 words of Matthew 6:12-24; these parallel texts are verbally identical except for the omission in 3 Nephi 6:19 of the word "where." The verbal agreements in these passages include three minor secondary variants (Matt. 6:12, 15, 18 = 3 Ne. 13:11, 15, 18) and the 14-word doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:13b = 3 Ne. 13:13). These verbal agreements in the ST with secondary readings in the Greek text followed in the KJV are just the sorts of

agreements one would *most* expect *not* to find if the Book of Mormon were a translation of a different sermon than the SM in a book unaffected by fifteen centuries of transmission of the Greek text of Matthew.

Thus, the evidence from NT textual criticism overwhelmingly shows that the ST in the Book of Mormon was based specifically on the SM as it appeared in the KJV. The one minor change of the KJV wording that reflects a better text of the sermon is one that Joseph Smith might have made based on information that was quite accessible to people of his time and culture. This text-critical evidence provides strong confirmation of the larger body of evidence already surveyed showing that Joseph used the KJV extensively in composing parts of the Book of Mormon.

7.1.7 Minor Variations from the Text of the Sermon on the Mount

While some Mormons have been reluctant to acknowledge the dependence of the ST on the KJV, others have openly admitted this fact while arguing that it does not undermine the validity of the Book of Mormon. For example, in his commentary on the Book of Mormon, Brant Gardner agreed that the inclusion of the doxological ending of the Lord's Prayer at 3 Nephi 13:13 "provides more evidence for Joseph's interaction with the King James Version in his Book of Mormon translation." He explained that Joseph "obviously took the position that it was preferable for his audience that texts resembling the King James Version also replicate its language…. Since he used the King James Version Matthew as the basis for the 3 Nephi sermon, it is no surprise that he retained this phrase" (Gardner 2007, 5:451).

Gardner's explanation makes sense of those places where the ST follows the KJV in a textually inferior form of the text, such as the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer. However, it cannot explain minor verbal variations from the KJV wording that do not significantly affect the meaning of the text. Suppose for the sake of argument that Joseph Smith had been inspired to see what the text on the gold plates meant and recognized that the text was similar in substance to the text of the SM. Gardner's position is that rather than translate such "known texts anew from the plates," he simply chose to follow the wording of the KJV where it was serviceable (Gardner 2007, 5:451). If that were so, then the ST in the Book of Mormon would agree with the wording of the KJV *everywhere* except those places where the KJV differed significantly in meaning from the text on the gold plates. Yet this is

demonstrably not the case. The beatitudes in 3 Nephi 12:3-12 provide abundant examples of insignificant verbal variations from the text of the SM as it is found in the KJV or in any other version (such variations shown here in red):

> 3 Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit, which cometh unto me,
> for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
> 4 And again, blessed are all they that mourn,
> for they shall be comforted;
> 5 and blessed are the meek,
> for they shall inherit the earth.
> 6 And blessed are all they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness,
> for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.
> 7 And blessed are the merciful,
> for they shall obtain mercy.
> 8 And blessed are all the pure in heart,
> for they shall see God.
> 9 And blessed are all the peace-makers,
> for they shall be called the children of God.
> 10 And blessed are all they which are persecuted for my name sake,
> for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
> 11 And blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute ~~you~~,
> and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake,
> 12 for ye shall have great joy and be exceeding glad,
> for great shall be your reward in Heaven:
> for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (3 Ne. 12:3-12)

If Joseph Smith used the KJV as the base text for the ST and varied from it only when the KJV wording was inadequate, then the ST should not contain these many insignificant verbal variations. Such variations appear throughout the rest of the ST. Some of the clearest examples are the following (all references to 3 Nephi):

- addition of "behold" (12:15, 27, 38, 43, 44)
- substitution of "to" in place of "unto" (12:15)
- substitution of "hath been" in place of "was" (12:21)
- substitution of "until" in place of "till" (12:26)
- addition of "that" (12:27, 31, 43)
- substitution of "whoso" in place of "whosoever" (12:32; 14:24)
- substitution of "who" in place of "that" (12:32)
- addition of "and" (12:33, 38, 43)
- reversal of "black or white" instead of "white or black" (12:36)

- syntax change of "thou not" instead of "not thou" (12:42)

- substitution of "you" instead of "thee" (13:2)

- substitution of "do as the hypocrites" in place of "be as the hypocrites are" (13:5)

- omission of "do" after "as the hypocrites" (13:7)

- omission of "where" (13:19)

- addition of "unto" (14:7)

- omission of "can" (14:18)

These changes can only be explained as deliberate alterations to the text of the SM as found in the KJV. They cannot be accidental, for three reasons. (1) There are too many of these insignificant verbal variations for them to be accidental. (2) Several of the variations appear in verses that Joseph Smith (and practically everyone else living in his society) knew well enough that they would have immediately recognized the changes. For example, most people in Joseph's day would have been familiar enough with the Beatitudes to recognize that the word *all* had been added to five of them. (3) Three of the variations are omissions of italicized words that were added in the KJV to make for smoother English (*you* in Matt. 5:11, omitted in 3 Ne. 12:11; *do* in Matt. 6:7, omitted in 3 Ne. 13:7; *can* in Matt. 7:18, omitted in 3 Ne. 14:18). No one reproducing these verses from the KJV would accidentally omit these words, since doing so makes the sentences somewhat more awkward. On the other hand, omitting these words does not affect the meaning of the texts in the slightest. Therefore, these words were clearly omitted deliberately, simply because they were italicized in the KJV and could be omitted without changing the meaning.

An adequate explanation of the text of the ST must explain both its similarities to and its differences from the SM in the KJV. Theories that deny Joseph Smith's dependence on the KJV are not able to account adequately for the *similarities* between the ST and the SM as it appears in the KJV—particularly where the KJV reflected an inaccurate Greek text. Theories that affirm both Joseph Smith's dependence on the KJV and the historical authenticity of the ST are not able to account adequately for the *differences* between the ST and the SM as it appears in the KJV—particularly the comparatively minor, insignificant differences. The only

theory that adequately accounts for both these similarities and differences between the ST and the SM in the KJV is that Joseph Smith composed the ST himself using the SM in the KJV as the base text and introducing whatever variations, major or minor, he saw fit. The insignificant verbal variations are most easily, and best, explained as Joseph's attempt to enhance the verisimilitude of the Book of Mormon as a supernaturally inspired translation by making it differ slightly in many places from the KJV.

7.2 The Sermon at the Temple and Synoptic Parallels

The literary dependence of the ST on the text of the SM as it appears in the KJV is further underscored by comparing the ST with both the SM in Matthew 5:3-7:27 and the Sermon on the Plain (SP) in Luke 6:20-49. Making this comparison is not superfluous, since the ST does differ from the SM in many places, as noted in the previous section.

The critical point to be made here is quite simple: wherever the ST parallels Jesus' Galilean sermon and the content, order, or wording of his sayings differs in Matthew and Luke, ***the ST always matches the Matthean version in the SM (as found in the KJV) and never the Lukan version in the SP instead***.

Recall that a central finding of chapter 5 of this study was that the SM in Matthew and the SP in Luke were two different versions of the same Galilean sermon (§5.3). Given this fact, if Jesus preached a similar sermon to the Nephites one would expect that in some places his Nephite sermon would agree verbally with the Lukan version and in other places with the Matthean version. In some places it would follow Matthew's order, in other places Luke's order. It would have some of the content that is in the Lukan sermon but not in the Matthean sermon and vice versa. Indeed, since it appears from the evidence presented previously that the Lukan version is closer in composition to the sermon Jesus delivered on that occasion and that the Lukan version displays less literary artistry than the Matthean version (§5.4-5), it would be reasonable to expect that a sermon by Jesus to the Nephites would be more like the SP than the SM both in general content and in wording. Yet this is not the case: the ST in the Book of Mormon *always* matches the SM rather than the SP in content, order, and wording, never the other way around.

An exhaustive comparison of the ST with the SM and the SP is unnecessary here. Instead an overview of the contents and order of the three versions of Jesus' sermon is provided in Table 45, with some of the distinctive wording in each shown. Two other sizable discourse units in Luke that parallel material in the SM are also shown (Luke 11:2-4, 9-13 in blue; 12:22-34 in red).

TABLE 45. THE SERMON AT THE TEMPLE AND SYNOPTIC PARALLELS		
Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:1-7:27 KJV)	**Sermon at the Temple (3 Nephi 12-14)**	**Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20b-49)**
	Four beatitudes: Blessed are those who believe the Twelve and are baptized (12:1b-2)	
Eight beatitudes: Theirs is the kingdom of heaven (5:3-10)	Eight beatitudes: Theirs is the kingdom of heaven (12:3-10)	Three beatitudes: Yours is the kingdom of God (6:20-21)
Last beatitude: Blessed are you reviled for my sake (5:11-12)	Last beatitude: Blessed are you reviled for my sake (12:11-12)	Last beatitude: Blessed are you reproached for the Son of Man's sake (6:22-23)
		Four woes (6:24-26)
Salt of the earth (5:13)	Salt of the earth (12:13)	
Light of the world (5:14-16)	Light of the world (12:14-16)	
Fulfil the Law and the Prophets (5:17-18)	Fulfil the Law and the Prophets (12:17-18)	
Least and great in the kingdom of heaven (5:19-20)		
	Come unto me and keep my commandments (12:19-20)	
You shall not kill.... Whoever is angry with his brother (5:21-23)	You shall not kill.... Whoever is angry with his brother (12:21-23)	
Be reconciled before you bring your gift to the altar (5:24-26)	Be reconciled before you come unto me (12:24-26a)	
	While ye are in prison can ye pay even one senine? (12:26b)	
You shall not commit adultery…. Whoever looks on a woman (5:27-28)	You shall not commit adultery…. Whoever looks on a woman (5:27-28)	
If your eye or hand offends you, cut it off rather than your whole body		
	Better to deny yourselves these things than that ye	
should be cast into hell (5:29-30)	should be cast into hell (12:29-30)	
Whoever puts away his wife (5:31-32)	Whoever puts away his wife (12:31-32)	
Don't swear by heaven, or earth,	Don't swear by heaven, or earth,	

or Jerusalem, or your head; say Yea or Nay (5:33-37)	or your head; say Yea or Nay (12:33-37)	
		Love your enemies, do good to them, bless and pray for them (6:27-28)
Eye for eye, tooth for tooth; resist not evil (5:38-39a)	Eye for eye, tooth for tooth; resist not evil (12:38-39a)	
Turn the other cheek, give your coat and your cloak (5:39b-40)	Turn the other cheek, give your coat and your cloak (12:39b-40)	Turn the other cheek, give your cloak and your coat (6:29)
Go with him twain (5:41)	Go with him twain (12:41)	
Give to him who asks (5:42)	Give to him who asks (12:42)	Give to him who asks (6:30)
Hate your enemies? Love your enemies (5:43-44a)	Hate your enemies? Love your enemies (12:43-44a)	
Do good to them, bless and pray for them (5:44b)	Do good to them, bless and pray for them (12:44b)	
		Do to others as you would have them do to you (6:31)
		If you love, do good, and lend to those who do so back, even sinners do that (6:32-34)
		Love your enemies, hoping for nothing back (6:35a)
That you may be children of your Father in heaven (5:45a)	That you may be children of your Father in heaven (12:45a)	You will be children of the Highest (6:35b)
		for he is kind to the evil (6:35c)
for he makes his sun shine on all and sends rain on all (5:45b)	for he makes his sun shine on all (12:45b)	
If you love and salute only those who love you, even publicans do that (5:46-47)		
	The old are fulfilled; old things are done away (12:46-47)	
Be perfect as your Father is perfect (5:48)	Be perfect as I or your Father (12:48)	Be merciful as your Father is perfect (6:36)
	I want you to do alms (13:1a)	
Don't do alms to be seen by others (6:1-4)	Don't do alms to be seen by others (13:1b-4)	
Don't pray to be seen by others or with vain repetitions (6:5-8)	Don't pray to be seen by others or with vain repetitions (13:5-8)	
Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth. Give us our daily bread. Forgive us our debts. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.	Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name. Your will be done on earth. Forgive us our debts. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.	Father, Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us our daily bread. Forgive us our sins. Lead us not into temptation (11:2-4)

Thine is the kingdom. (6:9-13)	Thine is the kingdom. (13:9-13)	
Forgive others (6:14-15)	Forgive others (13:14-15)	
Don't fast to be seen by others (6:16-18)	Don't fast to be seen by others (13:16-18)	
Lay up treasures in heaven (6:19-21)	Lay up treasures in heaven (13:19-21)	
The eye is the light of the body: single or evil (6:22-23)	The eye is the light of the body: single or evil (13:22-23)	
Can't serve two masters (6:24)	Can't serve two masters (13:24)	
	Jesus spoke to the twelve (13:25a)	
	I chose you to minister (13:25b)	
Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, drink, or wear; your Father feeds the birds and clothes the lilies of the field (6:25-31)	Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, drink, or wear; your Father feeds the birds and clothes the lilies of the field (13:25-31)	Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat or wear; your Father feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies (12:22-29)
The Gentiles seek these things (6:32a)		The nations of the world seek these things (12:30a)
Your Father knows you need all these things (6:32b)	Your Father knows you need all these things (13:32b)	Your Father knows you need all these things (12:30b)
Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (6:33)	Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (13:33)	Seek his kingdom (12:31)
		The Father wants to give you the kingdom (12:32)
		Give to the poor, get treasure in heaven (12:33-34)
Take no thought for the morrow (6:34)	Take no thought for the morrow (13:34)	
	Jesus spoke to the multitude (14:1a)	
Judge not (7:1)	Verily, verily, I say unto you, Judge not (14:1b)	Judge not (6:37a)
		Condemn not; forgive (6:37b)
		Give, and it will be given (6:38a)
With the judgment you judge, ye shall be judged (7:2a)	With the judgment you judge, ye shall be judged (14:2a)	
With the measure you mete it shall be measured (7:2b)	With the measure you mete it shall be measured (14:2b)	With the measure you mete it shall be measured (6:38b)
		Can the blind lead the blind? The disciple is not above his master (6:39-40)
The beam in your own eye (7:3-5)	The beam in your own eye (14:3-5)	The beam in your own eye (6:41-42)
Don't give what is holy to dogs or cast pearls before swine (7:6)	Don't give what is holy to dogs or cast pearls before swine (14:6)	

Ask, seek, knock (7:7-8) What man would give his son a stone or serpent? (7:9-10)	Ask, seek, knock (14:7-8) What man would give his son a stone or serpent? (14:9-10)	Ask, seek, knock (11:9-10) What man would give his son a stone or serpent? (7:11) Or a scorpion? (7:12)
How much more will your Father give good things (7:11)	How much more will your Father give good things (14:11)	How much more will your Father give the Holy Spirit (7:13)
Do to others what you would like them to do to you; this is the law and the prophets (7:12)	Do to others what you would like them to do to you; this is the law and the prophets (14:12)	
Broad way to destruction, narrow way to life (7:13-14)	Broad way to destruction, narrow way to life (14:13-14)	
Beware of false prophets (7:15)	Beware of false prophets (14:15)	
You will know them by their fruits (7:16a)	You will know them by their fruits (14:16a)	
Grapes from thorns, figs from thistles? (7:16b)	Grapes from thorns, figs from thistles? (14:16b)	
Good trees produce good fruit, corrupt trees bad fruit (7:17)	Good trees produce good fruit, corrupt trees bad fruit (14:17)	
A good tree cannot make bad fruit nor a corrupt tree good fruit (7:18)	A good tree cannot make bad fruit nor a corrupt tree good fruit (14:18)	A good tree cannot make corrupt fruit nor a corrupt tree good fruit (6:43) Every tree is known by its fruit (6:44a) No figs from thorns, no grapes from a bramble bush (6:44b)
Every tree with no good fruit is cut down (7:19) By their fruits you will know them (7:20)	Every tree with no good fruit is cut down (14:19) By their fruits you will know them (14:20)	
		Of the abundance of the heart a man's mouth speaks (6:45)
Not everyone who says Lord, Lord, but he who does the Father's will (7:21)	Not everyone who says Lord, Lord, but he who does the Father's will (14:21)	Why do you call me Lord, Lord, but don't do what I say? (6:46)
Many will say, Lord, Lord; I will say I never knew you (7:22-23)	Many will say, Lord, Lord; I will say I never knew you (14:22-23)	
Whoever does what I say will be like a wise man who built his house on a rock: it did not fall; while everyone who doesn't do what I say will be like a fool who built his house on the sand: it fell (7:24-27)	Whoever does what I say will be like a wise man who built his house on a rock: it did not fall; while everyone who doesn't do what I say will be like a fool who built his house on the sand: it fell (14:24-27)	Whoever does what I say is like a man who built his house's foundation on a rock: it could not be shaken; while the one that doesn't do what I say is like a man who built a house with no foundation: it fell (6:47-49)

The following are just some of the pertinent comparisons that can be made between the ST in the Book of Mormon and the two versions of Jesus' Galilean sermon, the SM in Matthew and the SP in Luke:

- None of the material that is in the ST but not in the SM is found anywhere in Luke (whether in the SP or elsewhere).

- None of the material in the SP but not the SM is in the ST. This includes the four woes (Luke 6:24-26), the sayings to condemn not, to forgive, and to give (6:37b-38a), the blind leading the blind and the disciple not above his master (6:39-40), and that man speaks from the abundance of his heart (6:45).

- The ST has the same eight beatitudes in the third person as the SM, and in the same order (Matt. 5:3-10; 3 Ne. 12:3-10), in contrast to the three beatitudes in the second person found in the SP (Luke 6:20-21).

- All three sermons have the same final beatitude, but the wording of the ST follows the SM rather than the SP, notably in saying "for my sake" rather than "for the Son of Man's sake" (Matt. 5:11-12; 3 Ne. 12:11-12; cf. Luke 6:22-23).

- The ST always follows Matthew's order where it differs from Luke's. For example, the SM and the ST both have the order *coat—cloak* (Matt. 5:40; 3 Ne. 12:40) whereas the SP has the order *cloak—coat* (Luke 6:29). Most noticeably, the SM and the ST have the Golden Rule in the same place, just prior to the sermon's concluding section (Matt. 7:12; 3 Ne. 14:12), whereas the SP has the Golden Rule in the midst of the sayings about loving one's enemies (Luke 6:31).

- Luke does not have the Lord's Prayer in the SP but does have it later, whereas the ST, following the SM in Matthew, does have it (Matt. 6:9-13; 3 Ne. 13:9-13; cf. Luke 11:2-4).

- Both Luke and the ST lack two lines of Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer, but they lack *different* lines. The ST lacks "Thy kingdom come" and "Give us this day our daily bread" (3 Ne. 13:10-11). Luke's version of the prayer lacks "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" and "but deliver us from evil" (Luke 11:3-4).

It is of course possible to construct arguments for viewing Matthew's order or wording in this or that detail as closer than Luke's to Jesus' original speech. However, to try to make that claim for *every* difference between Matthew and Luke

becomes an exercise in special pleading. Considerable evidence has already been presented that the SM reflects Matthew's editorial hand in terms of the selection, arrangement, and wording of Jesus' sayings (see especially §5.4 and §5.5.6).

Thus, one must conclude that the ST in the Book of Mormon was composed in dependence on the SM in Matthew. This literary dependence was not only a matter of Joseph Smith using the KJV wording in his translation where the ST happened to parallel sayings in the SM. The very contents, structure, ordering, and form of the sayings all derive from the Matthean version of the sermon.

7.3 The Sermon at the Temple: A Temple-Centred Text?

John Welch's exegetical arguments for viewing the SM as a temple text have already been critiqued (§5.6). It was shown there that the SM was not composed as a ritual text or as oriented particularly toward the temple or temple themes. In this section consideration is given to Welch's key arguments from the narrative context of the ST for viewing it as a temple text.

The most obvious connection of the ST to the temple is the fact that the Book of Mormon reports Jesus giving the ST at the temple. Welch began with and naturally emphasized this point. "Since he could have chosen to appear anywhere he wanted…his appearance at the temple invites the idea that his words have something important to do with teachings and ordinances found within the temple" (Welch 1999, 26). However, what the Book of Mormon says specifically is that Jesus appeared to "a great multitude" that was "gathered together…round about the temple" (3 Ne. 11:1). This multitude numbered about 2,500 people (3 Ne. 17:25) and remained outside throughout Jesus' speeches and actions that day (cf. 3 Ne. 17:24; 18:2, 38-39). Thus, none of these events took place "within the temple." Of course, Jesus' teachings might have pertained to the temple in some way, but the text does not give any indication of that being the case.

The term *temple* occurs only once more in the Book of Mormon following the above reference in 3 Nephi 11:1. Toward the end of Jesus' series of appearances to the Nephites, he quotes Malachi 3:1, "the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple" (3 Ne. 24:1). These are the only occurrences of the term *temple* in 3 Nephi. The second occurrence is clearly meant to explain the first: the reason Jesus appeared to the Nephites outside a temple was to fulfil Malachi 3:1.

Welch described the activities of the temple as including teaching and preaching, "gathering for ceremonies, coronations, obligatory annual festivals, ordinances, and covenant renewals (see 2 Nephi 6-10; Jacob 2-3; Mosiah 1-6), royal proclamations, and sacrifices (Welch 1999, 27). However, most of these functions are never mentioned in the Book of Mormon with reference to a temple. The temple is a place where prophets preached, taught, or declared God's word (Alma 16:13; 23:2-3; 26:29; Jacob 1:17; 2:2, 11), and where on one occasion there is mention of sacrifices and burnt offerings (Mosiah 2:3). Two kings gave speeches *outside* the temple (Benjamin, in Mosiah 1:18; 2:1, 5, 6, 7; Limhi, in Mosiah 7:17), though one should note that Benjamin's speech is also described as teaching (Mosiah 2:7, 29).

There is no reference anywhere in the Book of Mormon to annual festivals associated with the temple. In fact, the Book of Mormon is entirely lacking in references to *any* of the religious feasts that were laid down in the Law of Moses. There are no references to the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*); all of its references to atonement are in reference to Christ's sacrifice. The sacrifices mentioned in Mosiah 2:3 are offered on the occasion of King Benjamin's farewell speech, not the Day of Atonement or other annual festival. There is no mention of Passover (*Pesach*, Unleavened Bread) or the Feasts of Firstfruits, Weeks (Harvest, Pentecost, *Shavuot*), Trumpets, or Tabernacles (or Booths, *Sukkot*). Bruce McConkie admitted that there was "no intimation in the Book of Mormon that the Nephites offered the daily sacrifices required by the law or that they held the various feasts that were part of the religious life of their Old World kinsmen" (McConkie 1978, 427). McConkie's statement probably needs to be qualified with regard to daily sacrifices (Mosiah 13:30-31, cf. Welch 1994b, 306), but it is true that the Book of Mormon never *mentions* either the daily sacrifices or the annual feasts.

In a lengthy essay on the temple in the Book of Mormon, Welch asserted that "evidence in the Book of Mormon indicates that temples were equally important among the Nephites" as in other ancient societies (Welch 1994b, 298). Judging from the number of references to the temple, this does not seem to be the case. The term *temple* occurs only 31 times in the Book of Mormon (2 Ne. 5:16 [4x]; 16:1; Jacob 1:7; 2:2, 11; Mosiah 1:18; 2:1, 5, 6 [*bis*], 7, 37; 7:17; 11:10, 12; 19:5; Alma 7:21; 10:2; 16:13; 23:2; 26:29; Hel. 3:9, 14; 4:24; 10:8; 34:36; 3 Ne. 11:1; 24:1). By contrast, the term occurs 110 times in the OT (even though the term never occurs

from Genesis to Judges) and 119 times in the NT (these figures are based on the KJV). (In the material from Genesis through Judges, the term *tabernacle* appears 253 times in the KJV.) The contrast becomes even starker when synonymous terms are considered. For example, by far the most common term for the temple in the OT is *house of the LORD* and variant forms, which occur about 350 times, but the only occurrence of any form of the term in the Book of Mormon is the expression *house of the God of Jacob* in a quotation of Isaiah 2:3 (2 Ne. 12:3). Thus, when Welch sayid that his essay "assumes that temples were as important to the Nephites as they were to most advanced societies in antiquity" (Welch 1994b, 299), the textual evidence does not appear to bear out this assumption.

Furthermore, the numerous references to the temple in the OT nullify Welch's explanation that the Book of Mormon contains so few references to the temple "because of the sanctity of these buildings and their ordinances" (Welch 1994b, 343). In another essay, Welch and his co-author suggested several reasons that "the Book of Mormon never mentions Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles, or any other religious holiday specifically by name" (Szink and Welch 1998, 153). The Book of Mormon authors may have assumed their readers would recognize them (an assumption that has not been borne out at least for most modern readers), or omitted such references because they were writing after the Mosaic Law had been fulfilled (an argument rather dubious in light of the NT, which contains many such references).

In order to find the temple more prominent in Nephite religion than overt Book of Mormon references would suggest, Welch based his analysis primarily on "the doctrinal texts that typically surround references to the temple," which he called "temple texts." "I define a 'temple text' as one that contains the most sacred teachings of the plan of salvation that are not to be shared indiscriminately, and that ordains or otherwise conveys divine powers through ceremonial or symbolic means, together with sacred oaths that allow the recipient to stand ritually in the presence of God" (Welch 1994b, 300). These temple texts include the ST (3 Ne. 11-18) and a few other major passages (2 Ne. 6-10; Mosiah 1-6; Alma 12-13; Ether 1-4). Welch connects Mosiah 1-6 especially to the Day of Atonement, because of Benjamin's seven references to atonement and his emphatic statements about the people's unworthiness (Welch 1994b, 353-54, 356).

Other scholars have found allusions in Mosiah 1-6 to the Feast of Tabernacles, including Hugh Nibley, who noted that Mosiah 2:5 mentions that the people "pitched their tents round about" for each family (Nibley 1994, 120). In the OT, the Feast of Tabernacles was an annual festival lasting eight days in the middle of the seventh month, following the harvest. On each day the Israelites were to present food offerings, and the priests were to offer sizable burnt offerings as well. The first and eighth days of the festival were solemn days of rest, and the eighth day was a day of convocation or formal assembly of the people. During the seven or eight days of the festival, all Israelites were to live in tents to remind them of the tents of their exodus from Egypt (Lev. 23:34-36, 39-43; Num. 29:12-38; Deut. 16:13-17). Once every seven years, the Law was to be read aloud at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 31:10-13).

None of these elements appears in the account of the assembly to hear Benjamin, except for the tents and the burnt offerings (though the reference to the burnt offerings is too general to be relevant). For example, the only references to the "seventh month" in the Book of Mormon are in entirely different contexts with no allusion to annual festivals (Alma 10:6; 56:42). There are no references to periods of seven days or of eight days in the Book of Mormon other than one reference to the Sabbath (Mosiah 13:18). Perhaps for that reason, Nibley left Tabernacles behind and compared the event to what he calls the "great assembly" or "year-rite" celebrating "the creation of the world, the marriage and coronation of the king, and the birthday of the human race," climaxing in a feast. "All these elements are present in Benjamin's celebration" (Nibley 1994, 121-22). Nibley then drew some comparisons between Benjamin's assembly and an account from a tenth-century AD writer named Nathan the Babylonian of the rite of coronation of the Jewish "exilarch" or king in exile (123-26). After briefly citing Erik Hornung on an ancient Egyptian year-rite (126-27), Nibley gave a lengthy treatment of the passage in Mosiah 1-5 with no connections made to any of the alleged ancient precedents (128-37). The rest of the essay presented reflections on the concept of atonement, with no attempt to relate the concept to the Bible and only tangential connections to the Book of Mormon text (137-44).

Terrence Szink and John Welch, in their essay on the King Benjamin speech, admitted, "The main question Nibley left unresolved was why an inspired king in the

house of Israel would ever be inclined to mimic or dignify the practices of a pagan year-rite cult" (Szink and Welch 1998, 149). Rather than compare the passage to one particular feast or festival, they compared it to several OT festivals (New Year, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, and the Sabbatical and Jubilee years), noting various possible allusions to each in Mosiah 1-6 (150-202). All of these comparisons fall short in light of one simple fact: the text explicitly states that the assembly of Nephites around the temple was an extraordinary assembly called by special proclamation for the purpose of a formal transfer of authority in a rite of royal succession. The passage states that Benjamin told his chosen successor Mosiah: "My son, I would that ye should make a proclamation throughout all this land…that thereby they may be gathered together; for on the morrow I shall proclaim unto this my people out of mine own mouth that thou art a king and a ruler over this people" (Mosiah 1:10). If the assembly was an annual festival, no such special proclamation would have been necessary or helpful.

Welch gave a plausible enough argument that Jesus' appearance to the Nephites may have taken place at some sort of religious festival or scheduled event, perhaps Pentecost (Welch 1999, 36-41). As he pointed out, the Book of Mormon reports that a large number of Nephites were already gathered around the temple when Jesus appeared (3 Ne. 11:1-8). It is plausible in that narrative context that they were already gathered there for some regular event such as one of the Israelite festivals. However, it goes beyond the textual evidence to conclude that the event, about which the text says nothing, infuses the speech that follows with temple-centred significance. As a simple matter of narrative necessity, a gathering of people is required to witness the arrival of the Lord at his temple in fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy and to become the charter members of the newly constituted church of Christ in the Nephite lands. Thus, while the setting includes a temple and may imply that the event took place during a religious festival, these contextual elements are not sufficient to establish the conclusion that the ST was a "temple text" in Welch's strong sense (one containing sacred teachings not to be shared indiscriminately and that conveyed God's power and presence through ritual and oaths).

If Jesus' speech to the Nephites had been a temple-centred presentation pertaining to sacred truths and rites to be found inside the temple, it is very odd that temples are never mentioned after Jesus' departure from the Nephites. According to

the text, Nephites worshiped in synagogues during the early centuries after Jesus' visitations (3 Ne. 18:32; Moroni 7:1); as apostasy took hold they built ornate churches (4 Ne. 1:41; Mormon 8:36-37). However, temples are never mentioned after AD 34. While arguments from silence are not deductive proofs, when the silence pertains to what is held to be central and essential such an omission poses at the least some difficulty. It is reasonable to infer that when the Book of Mormon was written, its author regarded the temple as an aspect of the old Mosaic law covenant that had been "fulfilled" in Christ.

7.4 The Sermon at the Temple and the Discourses in 3 Nephi 11-18

7.4.1 The Sermons at the Temple

The book of 3 Nephi presents Jesus as delivering several major speeches to the Nephites in AD 34, not just the material in 3 Nephi 12-14 parallel to the SM. In fact, although John Welch sometimes uses the term "Sermon at the Temple" to refer to that material parallel to Matthew 5-7 (e.g., Welch 1999, 255-76), more often he uses it to designate the broader body of text encompassing 3 Nephi 11-18 (e.g., Welch 1999, 47-104). Technically, however, 3 Nephi 11-18 is not a single sermon; it presents a series of sermons, and about four-fifths of the text is speech attributed to Jesus (about 209 of 258 verses: 3 Nephi 11:10-11, 14, 21, 22b-41; 12:1b-13:24, 25b-34; 14:1b-27; 15:1b, 3-10; 15:12-16:20; 17:1b-4, 6-8, 14b, 20b, 23b; 18:5-7, 10-16, 18-25, 27-35). This section of 3 Nephi begins with Jesus' first appearance to the Nephites (11:1-9) and ends with his ascension (18:38-39). For sake of clarity, in this study the term "Sermon at the Temple" (ST) is being used more narrowly to refer to the material parallel to Matthew 5-7.

Comparing the ST to the surrounding discourse units attributed to Jesus in the same context (apparently on the same day, cf. 3 Ne. 19:2-4) turns out to be instructive. The main discourses in 3 Nephi 11-18 are the following:

- The rite and meaning of baptism (3 Ne. 11:22b-41)
- The ST, i.e., the discourse parallel to the SM (3 Ne. 12-14)
- The passing away of old things referred to the Law of Moses (3 Ne. 15:3-10)
- The meaning of the "other sheep" in John 10:16 (3 Ne. 15:12-16:20)
- The rite of the bread and wine, and praying to the Father (3 Ne. 18:1-35)

It is noteworthy that all of the discourses in this section of 3 Nephi have one or at most two narrow topics on which the discourse is focused—baptism (11), the passing of the Law of Moses (15), the meaning of "other sheep" (15-16), and the Lord's Supper and prayer to the Father (18)—except for the ST. The ST, like the SM, is a wide-ranging discourse that addresses the kingdom, the Law, anger, lust, divorce, oaths, love, alms, prayer, fasting, material needs, judgmentalism, and false prophets. This notable difference invites the question as to why the ST should be structured so differently than all of the other discourses Jesus gave on the same day. Before drawing any conclusions in that regard, other aspects of these other discourses should also be considered.

7.4.2 The Modern Orientation of the Discourses around the Sermon at the Temple

As was documented at some length in the previous chapter, the Book of Mormon consistently reflects the religious and cultural concerns of Joseph Smith's day and not the ancient American context in which it was supposedly written (see §6.4.3.5). Setting aside the ST for the moment, the discourses in 3 Nephi 11-18 likewise address topics that seem likely to have been of more interest to modern readers than to Jesus' supposed hearers:

1. The discourse on baptism gives specific instructions on the mode of baptism, the words to be spoken when baptizing someone, and repeatedly demands that there be no "disputations" on the subject of baptism (3 Ne. 11:22b-30). The speech includes a statement asserting that "there hath hitherto been" such "disputations" about baptism, though there is no evidence of debate among the Nephites about the subject. More will be said about this point below.

2. The discourse on the Law explains that the Law is fulfilled in Christ and thereby brought to an end, while everything the prophets said either had been fulfilled or would be fulfilled by Christ in the future (15:3-10). The role of the OT and especially of the Law has been a topic of perennial debate within Protestantism.

3. The discourse on the "other sheep" explains why the NT says nothing about the Nephites and that the conventional interpretation of John 10:16 as referring to the Gentiles is wrong (15:12-16:20)—a subject of complete irrelevance to

the Nephites who would never have any contact with the readers of the NT. This discourse is most obviously aimed at modern readers.

4. Finally, the discourse on the Lord's Supper and prayer articulates an overtly non-sacramental view of the rite (an irony in view of the fact that Mormons came to refer to the rite as "the sacrament"). The speech's explanation of the rite in just three verses uses the synonyms *testimony* and *witness* three times and the words *remembrance* and *memory* six times (18:7, 10-11). At the end of the discourse, Jesus instructs the Nephites to withhold the rite from unworthy persons but not to exclude them from their places of worship (18:28-32). (The matter of church discipline regarding the "unworthy" is what holds together the two topics of the Lord's Supper and prayer in this discourse, since it instructs the people to pray for the unworthy but not to exclude them from their fellowship.) He then tells them he has given them these commandments "because of the disputations which hath been among you beforetime" (18:34). This statement is odd because the Nephites did not even have the sacrament prior to its supposed institution at this point in time. By contrast, of course, the Lord's Supper has been the focus of much controversy throughout Protestant church history, as has been the case with baptism. Nor is there any reference in the Book of Mormon to debate over church discipline (Alma 32-33 tells about godly people who were expelled from synagogues by snooty rich people). Here again, the discourse appears to be aimed at modern readers.

7.4.3 Comparing Nephi's and Jesus' Speeches on Baptism (2 Nephi 31 and 3 Nephi 11)

The speeches surrounding the ST in 3 Nephi are surprisingly similar to speeches in other parts of the Book of Mormon attributed to different speakers in different periods. The similarities are so striking that it is really beyond serious doubt that the speeches have one author. For example, consider the speech about baptism given by Nephi in the sixth century BC (2 Ne. 31:13-21) with the speech about baptism given by Jesus in the first century AD (3 Ne. 11:22b-39). The very fact that Nephi is said to have given a speech in the sixth century BC about Christian baptism is itself highly anachronistic, but the problems discussed here go beyond that quite legitimate criticism.

Table 46. Nephi's and Christ's Speeches on Baptism in the Book of Mormon	
Nephi (2 Nephi 31:13-21)	**Jesus (3 Nephi 11:22b-39)**

Wherefore, my beloved brethren,
 I know that if ye shall follow the Son,
 with full purpose of heart,
 acting no hypocrisy
 and no deception before God,
 but with real intent, <u>repenting of your sins</u>,
 witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing
 to take upon you the name of Christ,
 by baptism—
 yea, by following your Lord and your Savior
 down into the water, according to his word,
 behold, then shall ye receive
     the Holy Ghost;
 yea, then cometh the baptism
 of fire and of the Holy Ghost;
 and then can ye speak
     with the tongue of angels,
 and shout praises unto
     the Holy One of Israel.
 But, **behold**, my beloved brethren,
 thus came the voice of the Son unto me,
     saying:
 After ye have <u>repented of your sins</u>,
 and witnessed unto the Father
 that ye are willing to keep my
     commandments,
 by the baptism of water, and have received
 the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost,
 and can speak with a new tongue,
 yea, even with the tongue of angels,
 and after this should deny me,
 it would have been better for you
 that ye had not known me.
 And I heard a voice from the Father, saying:
 Yea, the words of my Beloved
 are true and faithful.
 He that endureth to the end,
 <u>the same shall be saved</u>.
 And now, my beloved brethren,
 I know by this that unless a man
 shall endure to the end,
 in following the example
 of the Son of the living God,
 he cannot be saved.
 Wherefore, do the things
 which I have told you I have seen
 that your Lord and your Redeemer should
     do;
 for, for this cause have they been shown
     unto me,
	On this wise shall ye baptize;
	 and there shall be no disputations among
	     you.
	 Verily I say unto you,
	 that whoso <u>repenteth of his sins</u>
	 through your words,
	 and desireth to be baptized in my name,
	 on this wise shall ye baptize them:
	 Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the
	     water,
	 and in my name shall ye baptize them.
	 And now **behold**,
	 these are the words which ye shall say,
	 calling them by name, saying:
	 Having authority given me of Jesus Christ,
	 I baptize you
	 in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
	 and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.
	 And then shall ye immerse them in the
	     water,
	 and come forth again out of the water.
	 And after this manner shall ye baptize in my
	     name,
	 for **behold**, verily I say unto you,
	 that the Father, and the Son,
	 and the Holy Ghost are one;
	 and I am in the Father, and the Father in me,
	 and the Father and I are one.
	 And according as I have commanded you,
	 thus shall ye baptize.
	 And there shall be no disputations among
	     you,
	 as there hath hitherto been;
	 neither shall there be disputations among
	     you
	 concerning the points of my doctrine,
	 as there hath hitherto been;
	 for verily, verily I say unto you,
	 he that hath the spirit of contention, is not of
	     me,
	 but is of the Devil,
	 which is the father of contention,
	 and he stirreth up the hearts of men
	 to contend with anger, one with another.
	 Behold, <u>this is not my doctrine</u>,
	 to stir up the hearts of men with anger,
	 one against another;
	 but <u>this is my doctrine</u>,
	 that such things should be done away.
	 Behold, verily, verily I say unto you,

that ye might know
the gate by which ye should enter.
For the gate by which ye should enter
is repentance and baptism by water;
and then cometh a remission of your sins
by fire and by the Holy Ghost.
And then are ye in
this strait and narrow path
which leads to eternal life;
yea, ye have entered in by the gate;
ye have done according to the
        commandments
of the Father and the Son;
and ye have received **the Holy Ghost,**
which witnesses of the Father and the
        Son,
unto the fulfilling of the promise
which he hath made,
that if ye entered in by the way ye should
        receive.
And now, my beloved brethren,
after ye have gotten into
this strait and narrow path,
I would ask if all is done?
Behold, I say unto you, Nay;
for ye have not come thus far
save it were by the word of Christ
with unshaken faith in him,
relying wholly upon the merits
of him who is mighty to save.
Wherefore, ye must press forward
with a steadfastness in Christ,
having a perfect brightness of hope,
and a love of God and of all men.
Wherefore, if ye shall press forward,
feasting upon the word of Christ,
and endure to the end,
behold, thus saith the Father:
Ye shall have eternal life.
And now, **behold**, my beloved brethren,
this is the way;
and there is none other way
nor name given under heaven
whereby man can be saved
in the kingdom of God.
And now, **behold**, this is the doctrine of
        Christ,
and the only and true doctrine
of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost,
which is one God, without end. Amen.

I will declare unto you my doctrine.
And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine
which the Father hath given unto me;
and I bear record of the Father,
and the Father beareth record of me,
and the **Holy Ghost beareth record**
of the Father and me,
and I bear record that the Father
commandeth all men, every where, to repent
and believe in me;
and whoso believeth in me, and is baptized,
the same shall be saved;
and they are they which
shall inherit the kingdom of God.
And whoso believeth not in me,
and is not baptized, shall be damned.
--Verily, verily I say unto you,
that this is my doctrine;
and I bear record of it from the Father;
and whoso believeth in me,
believeth in the Father also;
and unto him will the Father bear record of
        me;
for he will visit him
with fire, and with the Holy Ghost;
and thus will the Father bear record of me;
and **the Holy Ghost will bear record unto**
        him
of the Father and me:
for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost,
        are one.
And again I say unto you, ye must repent,
and become as a little child,
and be baptized in my name,
or ye can in nowise receive these things.
And again I say unto you, Ye must repent,
and be baptized in my name,
and become as a little child,
or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of
        God.
Verily, verily I say unto you,
that this is my doctrine;
and whoso buildeth upon this,
buildeth upon my rock;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against
        them.

The speeches in 2 Nephi 31 and 3 Nephi 11 are roughly the same length, use much of the same distinctive language, explain the significance of baptism in essentially the same way, appear to be written in the same style, and show little if any religious or theological development from one to the other (see Table 46). Note, for example, that both speeches refer to the oneness of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; both speak of the Holy Ghost witnessing to or bearing record of the Father and the Son; both promise those who are baptized the coming of fire and the Holy Ghost; and both conclude that baptism is necessary to enter "the kingdom of God" and that this is Christ's "doctrine." Furthermore, both speeches exhibit the same repetitious style and other indicators of common authorship (such as the overuse of the interjection "Behold").

To put the similarities of the two speeches in perspective, they are presented in the Book of Mormon as having taken place as far apart chronologically as were Daniel and Jesus in the Bible (Daniel, in fact, lived at the same time as Nephi is said to have lived), and they would have been much further apart geographically and culturally. Yet there is no evidence whatsoever that the speeches of Nephi and Jesus in the Book of Mormon originated in different centuries or even from different speakers or writers (other than the simple assertion of the narrative). There is far more development between Jesus and Paul, both first-century Jews living in the same part of the world, than between the Nephi and Jesus of the Book of Mormon.

Another notable feature that the two speeches share in common is that both contain evident allusions to NT texts. For example, the speech in 2 Nephi 31 includes the statement, "and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved," echoing Acts 4:12, and the speech in 3 Nephi 11 alludes to Paul's statement in Acts 17:30 when it says that the Father "commandeth all men, every where, to repent."

7.4.4 Lack of Rhetorical Structure: Chiasmus in 3 Nephi 17?

Another significant difference between the ST and the surrounding discourses in 3 Nephi 11-18 is that none of the other discourses exhibit the sort of careful literary composition or rhetorical structures evident in the SM or in the ST to the extent that it follows the SM (see §5.4). The speeches are not amorphous, of course; they generally proceed in a recognizable direction and develop in a

meaningful fashion. However, they lack the demonstrable structural and rhetorical artistry that is so evident in the SM. The most noticeable rhetorical feature of the speeches is repetition, but the repetition does not contribute to any recognizable pattern such as chiasmus or (except in a very few instances of sentences echoing biblical texts) Hebrew parallelism. There are also few if any of the kind of triadic elements that are so numerous in the SM in these speeches in 3 Nephi, with the noticeable exception of references to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (3 Ne. 11:25, 27). The point may be illustrated with the following passage:

> **And there shall be no disputations among you**,
> *as there hath hitherto been*;
> **neither shall there be disputations among you**
> concerning the points of my doctrine,
> *as there hath hitherto been*;
> for verily, verily I say unto you,
> he that hath the spirit of contention, is not of me,
> but is of the Devil, which is the father of contention,
> and he ***stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger,***
>   ***one with another***.
> Behold, <u>this is not my doctrine</u>,
> to ***stir up the hearts of men with anger,***
>   ***one against another***;
> but <u>this is my doctrine</u>, that such things should be done away.
>   (3 Ne. 11:28b-30)

      The repetition evident in the passage lacks any clear structure and is fairly described as *repetitious* rather than as repetition for rhetorical effect. This repetitious style is characteristic of all of the speeches in 3 Nephi 11-18 except the ST in chapters 12-14. This assessment cannot be proved with a single brief quotation such as the above, which is given only for illustrative purposes.

      However, there is one small unit of text requiring attention here, one that John Welch has highlighted as an instance of literary artistry. In 3 Nephi 17:5-10, Jesus is said to have delayed his departure in order to provide healing to the people. Welch analysed this passage as a chiasmus—and part of Jesus' speech in the passage as a chiasmus within the chiasmus (Welch 1999, 192-94). As mentioned in the review of literature on the ST (§2.10), Welch pioneered the idea that the Book of Mormon contains several if not many examples of chiasmus (also callec chiasm). As Welch explained in his original article on the subject, the discovery was highly significant because chiasmus was a characteristic literary form in ancient literature, more

specifically "an ancient Hebraic literary form"—and since "there exists no chance that Joseph Smith could have learned of this style," it testifies to the ancient, Hebraic origin of the Book of Mormon. "Since the Book of Mormon contains numerous chiasms, it thus becomes logical to consider the book a product of the ancient world and to judge its literary qualities accordingly" (Welch 1969, 1, 6).

Chiasmus is a form of inverted or reverse parallelism. The simplest and most common chiasmi have two or three parallel elements in each half, as in the following examples:

Matthew 20:16
A. So the last
   B. will be first,
   B'. and the first
A'. last.

Matthew 23:12
A. Whoever exalts
   B. himself
     C. will be humbled,
     C'. and whoever humbles
   B'. himself
A'. will be exalted.

Examples of longer or more elaborate chiasmi have been given earlier in this study, including the Suffering Servant Song of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 (§6.5.5), the eight regularly formed Matthean beatitudes, Matthew 5:3-10 (§5.4.4.1, see Table 25), and the conclusion of the SM, Matthew 7:13-27 (§5.4.4.5, see Table 29).

Welch analysed 3 Nephi 17:5-10 as a chiasmus, within which he found another, smaller chiasmus—possibly two (summarizing Welch 1999, 191-92):

   A: "Three references to the eyes" (17:5)
     B: Jesus' chiastic speech (17:6-7)
       C: Five *I—you* statements (17:8)
     B': The people's (chiastic) response (17:9)
   A: "Three references to the feet" (17:10)

In order to assess the validity of this analysis, it will be necessary to set out the passage in full. For the sake of comparing the outline to the text, the text is here set out according to Welch's outline:

A   ⁵And it came to pass that when Jesus had thus spoken, he cast his <u>eyes</u> round about again on the multitude, and beheld they were in <u>tears</u>, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them.

B   ⁶And he said unto them: Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you. ⁷Have ye any that are <u>sick</u> among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are <u>lame</u>, or <u>blind</u>, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or <u>that are afflicted in any manner</u>? Bring them hither and I will <u>heal them</u>, for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy.

C   ⁸For I perceive that ye desire that I should show unto you what I have done unto your brethren at Jerusalem, for I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you.

B'   ⁹And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their <u>sick</u> and their afflicted, and their <u>lame</u>, and with their <u>blind</u>, and with their dumb, and with all them <u>that were afflicted in any manner</u>; and he did <u>heal them</u> every one as they were brought forth unto him.

A'   ¹⁰And they did all, both they who had been healed and they who were whole, bow down at his <u>feet</u>, and did worship him; and as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his <u>feet</u>, insomuch that they did bathe his <u>feet</u> with their <u>tears</u>.

Welch's larger chiastic outline of the passage has two basic flaws. The first is that the description of verse 5 as including "three references to the eyes" is dubious at best. There are indeed three references to feet in verse 10. More precisely, there are three explicit references to Jesus' "feet" in verse 10, which states that the multitude bowed down "at his feet," that they "kissed his feet," and they "did bathe his feet in their tears." However, there is only one reference to Jesus' "eyes" in verse 5. To get three, Welch counted as follows: (1) "he cast his eyes round about"; (2) "beheld they were in tears" (Welch said, "their eyes were in tears"); (3) "did look steadfastly upon him" (3 Ne. 17:5). This simply does not work; one could just as easily argue for four references to eyes in verse 5 (*eyes*, *beheld*, *tears*, and *look*), two in regard to Jesus and two in regard to the Nephites. What would be needed would be either three explicit references to Jesus' eyes or three explicit references to the Nephites' eyes.

As it stands, the supposed chiastic parallel between verses 5 and 10 is simply too weak to be plausible. This does not mean there is no meaningful parallel between those two verses. The references to the Nephites' "tears" may be taken as forming a natural *inclusio* in the passage. However, this one verbal parallel is probably not enough to support a chiastic outline.

The second and more fundamental flaw in the outline is that it runs counter to the natural construction of the passage, which is a three-part outline as follows:

- Jesus saw the people wanted him to stay longer (v. 5)
- Jesus offered to stay in order to heal them of their afflictions (vv. 6-8)
- Jesus healed the sick and the people worshiped at his feet (vv. 9-10)

This outline follows a standard format for such pericopes: *narrative—speech—narrative.* Welch's chiastic outline makes the narrative introduction into part A, breaks up Jesus' speech into parts B and C, and breaks up the narrative conclusion into parts B' and A', an analysis that simply does not fit the literary structure of the pericope. Welch himself has explained that proposed chiasmic outlines are questionable if they do not fit the natural literary form of the text. "To the extent that the proposed structure crosses over natural barriers, unnaturally chops sentences in half, or falls short of discernible boundaries in the text as a whole, the more dubious the suggested chiasm becomes" (Welch 1995, 6).

As noted above, Welch analysed the text in section B of his proposed larger chiasmic outline as an inner chiasmus. Here is the outline he presented for that unit of text (Welch 1999, 191):

a Behold, my *bowels are filled*
    b with *compassion* towards you.
        c Have ye any that are sick among you?
            d *Bring them hither.*
                e Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or…withered, or…deaf, or…afflicted in any manner?
            d' *Bring them hither*
        c' and I will heal them,
    b' for I have *compassion* upon you;
a' my *bowels are filled* with mercy.
<div align="center">3 Nephi 17:6-7</div>

There are several problems with this chiastic analysis. (1) The line "my bowels are filled with compassion towards you" is a single clause, whereas "for I have compassion upon you" and "my bowels are filled with mercy" are two distinct clauses. This difference is inconsistent with a designed or rhetorically literate chiasmus, which as Welch rightly pointed out should appear in harmony with the natural boundaries or literary features of the text—a problem already noted with regard to the larger chiasmus.

(2) The two questions, "**Have ye any** sick among you?" and "**Have ye any** that are lame…," etc., are parallel thoughts that begin in exactly the same way, but they are not coordinated lines of the chiasmus.

(3) The lengthy question at the centre of the chiasmus is not a strong candidate for the central or emphasized theme or idea of the passage. In his article on criteria for identifying chiasmus, Welch observed, "Without a well-defined centerpiece or distinct crossing effect, there is little reason for seeing chiasmus" (Welch 1995, 8). Thematically, one would expect a statement like "I will heal them" to stand at the turning point, not a question about whether there are any sick among the multitude. Both its weakness thematically and its verbose wording make this question an unlikely central line of a rhetorically intentional chiasmus.

(4) Jesus' speech continues for one more verse or sentence: "For I perceive that ye desire that I should show unto you what I have done unto your brethren at Jerusalem, for I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you" (3 Ne. 17:8). It is unlikely that the first two-thirds of Jesus' speech would form a chiasmus while the final third, even though thematically related to the rest of the speech, would be excluded from that chiasmus. Here again, the supposed chiasmus does not correspond to the actual literary unit in the passage.

These points of weakness in the chiastic analysis of the passage, considered cumulatively, call into question the cogency of that analysis. The fact that the words of the passage can be arranged in such a way as to look like a chiasmus is probably a result of the pervasive use of repetition throughout the Book of Mormon, examples of which have already been given. In a text characterized by a high degree of repetitiousness, the chances of a faux chiasmus appearing in the text will be correspondingly high. Some passages may even fit a chiastic structure. The point here is not to claim that the Book of Mormon never exhibits any degree of literary artistry or compositional technique. Such a claim would be clearly false. Rather, the point is that a passage such as 3 Nephi 17:5-10 does not exhibit the same level of formal rhetorical structure evident in the Matthean SM, and certainly does not exhibit a literary structure that marks it as an ancient Hebraic text.

Before leaving 3 Nephi 17:5-10, there is some evidence that this passage was composed by an author drawing (consciously or unconsciously) from the Gospels in the KJV. The passage sets the scene by reporting that Jesus saw the

multitude, felt compassion toward them, and offered to heal their sick (3 Ne. 17:6-7). This scene appears to mimic scenes narrated in the Synoptic Gospels, especially in Matthew, in which Jesus performed various healings for the multitudes that gathered to see him (Matt. 4:23-25; 8:16-17; 9:35-36; 14:14; 15:30-32; 21:14; Mark 1:32-34; 3:9-10; Luke 6:17-19; 7:21; 9:11). A noteworthy example is Matthew 14:14, which refers to Jesus seeing a "multitude," being moved "with compassion toward" them, and healing their "sick." Compare that verse with the verses in 3 Nephi:

> "**And** it came to pass that when **Jesus** had thus spoken, he cast his eyes round about again on the **multitude**, and beheld they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them. And he said unto them: Behold, my bowels are filled **with compassion towards** you. Have ye any that are **sick** among you?" (3 Ne. 17:5-6).

> "**And Jesus** went forth, and saw a great **multitude**, and was moved **with compassion toward** them, and he healed their **sick**" (Matt. 14:14 KJV).

The comparison does not at this point rise to the level of clear evidence that Joseph Smith deliberately drew on this or other passages from the Gospels. However, there is additional evidence that makes this quite likely, specifically the list of afflictions that Jesus gives in his question to the multitude:

> "Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither" (3 Ne. 17:7).

All seven of the terms denoting specific physical infirmities in 3 Nephi 17:7 appear in lists of infirmities in the Gospels (Matt. 15:30-31; 11:5; Luke 7:22; 14:13, 21; John 5:3). The only specific infirmity found in those Gospel lists that is not in 3 Nephi 17:7 is "dumb" (Matt. 15:30, 31)—and that infirmity is mentioned in 3 Nephi 17:9. Jesus' list in Matthew 11:5/Luke 7:22 included deliberate allusions to Isaiah 35:5-6 (which refers to healing for the blind, deaf, lame, and dumb) and Isaiah 61:1 (good news for the poor). 3 Nephi 17:7, however, shows no evidence of any allusion to Isaiah; instead its list appears to have been culled from the Gospels. All seven terms may be found in as few as three verses (Matt. 11:5; John 5:3; and any of the other lists). This information provides a solid basis for Brant Gardner's opinion that "the specific list of illnesses is influenced more by the biblical text than by the historical New World" (Gardner 2007, 5:485).

One fact that provides striking confirmation of the conclusion that the list of infirmities was taken from the Gospels concerns two of the terms in the list, "lame"

and "halt." Although they are treated as two different kinds of infirmities in 3 Nephi 17:7, the words are really synonymous. The KJV uses the words "halt" and "lame" in the NT to translate the same Greek word, *chōlos*. This word is translated "halt" four times (Matt. 18:8; Mark 9:45; Luke 14:21; John 5:3), "crippled" once (Acts 14:8), and "lame" nine times (Matt. 11:5; 15:30, 31; 21:14; Luke 7:22; 14:13; Acts 3:2; 8:7; Heb. 12:13). There is no difference in meaning in these three different renderings; in each instance the word has exactly the same meaning, an inability to walk or to stand on one's legs. Thus, when 3 Nephi 17:7 uses the words "lame" *and* "halt" to describe two categories of infirmities, it makes a simple mistake.

Thus, a close examination of 3 Nephi 17:5-10 shows that it is probably not a translation of an ancient Nephite text, but a modern composition meant to present Jesus as having done for the Nephites the same sorts of healings he performed in Galilee.

7.4.5 Conclusion: The Other Discourses Attributed to Jesus

To review, four main points have been made in this section about the speeches attributed to Jesus in the same part of the Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 11-18). (1) The speeches in 3 Nephi 11, 15-16, and 18 all are narrowly focused on one or at most two specific topics, unlike the wide-ranging topics of the ST in 3 Nephi 12-14. (2) The speeches surrounding the ST are more plausibly understood as directed at Joseph Smith's modern Protestant readers than at Jesus' supposed ancient Nephite hearers. (3) The speeches surrounding the ST are quite similar, doctrinally and stylistically, to speeches attributed to other speakers in other parts of the Book of Mormon. (4) None of the speeches surrounding the ST exhibit the same type or level of rhetorical structure and artistry as the SM, which is largely repeated in the ST. Third Nephi 17:5-10, the one passage in 3 Nephi 11-18 outside chapters 12-14 that Welch argued exhibited such literary artistry is too weak an example to constitute an exception, and there is evidence in that passage that it was composed by a modern author using the KJV.

These four considerations, taken together, constitute a strong case for questioning the historical authenticity of the speeches attributed to Jesus in his initial appearance to the Nephites in 3 Nephi 11-18. These speeches appear to have been composed by the author of the rest of the Book of Mormon and for the benefit of

modern readers. The ST also stands out from the rest of these speeches in terms of its contents and its rhetorical elements. These differences between the ST and the speeches that surround it in 3 Nephi 11-18 have a simple explanation: unlike the other speeches, the ST is largely a revised version of a specific passage in the NT Gospels. Thus, the evidence adduced here through an analysis of the speeches in 3 Nephi 11-18 supports the conclusion that the modern author of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, produced all of those speeches, though in the case of the ST he did so by incorporating the SM with such changes as he thought were appropriate. The remainder of this chapter will demonstrate that this assessment of the ST is correct.

7.5   Changes to the Sermon on the Mount in the Sermon at the Temple

As has just been mentioned, there are significant differences between the SM and the ST. The question to be addressed here is whether these differences are best explained as stemming from the speech's presumed ancient situation or from the perspective of its modern author, Joseph Smith. To address this question, it is of course necessary to discuss those differences in some detail.

7.5.1 New Opening Beatitudes (3 Nephi 12:1-2)

The largest difference between the ST and the SM comes at the very beginning of the ST, in a 158-word passage that is not found in the SM (3 Ne. 12:1-2). However, the material is integrated into the ST as a series of beatitudes that precede the ones familiar from the SM. It will therefore be helpful to set out this material in strophe-like format, in order to compare them to the beatitudes that the ST has in common with the SM:

> **Blessed are ye**, if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve
>> which I have chosen from among you
>>> to minister unto you and to be your servants;
>> and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water;
>> and after that ye are baptized with water,
>> behold I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost;
> therefore **blessed are ye**, if ye shall believe in me, and be baptized,
>> after that ye have seen me, and know that I am.
> And again, more **blessed are they** which shall believe in your words,
>> because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me,
>>> and that ye know that I am.
> Yea, **blessed are they** which shall believe in your words,

> and come down into the depths of humility,
> and be baptized;
> for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost,
> and shall receive a remission of their sins.

The next words in the ST following the above passage are the words of the first Matthean beatitude, introduced with the word *Yea* (see Table 41 in §7.1). This use of *Yea*, which is also used to introduce the last of the four new beatitudes, functions to tie those new beatitudes to the group of beatitudes found in the SM (so also Nyman 2003, 151; Gardner 2007, 5:399). Thus, it is clear that the reader is supposed to understand this opening material as part of a larger series of beatitudes that includes the ones found in the SM. One LDS commentary concluded, "The Lord gave four beatitudes to the Nephites before beginning the well-known collection in the New Testament" (Ogden and Skinner 2011, 141).

The four new beatitudes differ strikingly from the Matthean beatitudes both in form and in substance, even though the ST preserves the basic form and substance of the Matthean beatitudes with mostly superficial differences. The differences in form are visually obvious, though it will be helpful to describe them objectively. Only the fourth of the new beatitudes can be regarded as structurally parallel to the Matthean beatitudes, exhibiting the structure "Blessed are they which…for they shall…." This is essentially the same structure as the second through the seventh Matthean beatitudes (Matt. 5:4-9; 3 Ne. 12:4-9). Even this similarly structured beatitude, however, is formally quite different due to the elaborate character of its two halves. Whereas the fourth through the seventh Matthean beatitudes (and for that matter also the first and eighth) each have just two verbal clauses (one for each half), the fourth new beatitude has three verbal clauses in its first half and two verbal clauses in its second half. The first three new beatitudes bear no structural resemblance to the Matthean beatitudes, nor do they share any common structure or form with each other. They are "beatitudes" only in the superficial sense that they begin with the words "blessed are." It is impossible to analyse the four new beatitudes into any sort of coherent literary or rhetorical pattern or to integrate them structurally into the highly structured pattern of the Matthean beatitudes.

As shown earlier in this study (§5.4.4.1), the Matthean beatitudes exhibit a clear rhetorical pattern and careful compositional arrangement. There are nine beatitudes, arranged compositionally in a well-defined pattern of eight "regular," brief

beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-10) followed by one longer, more complex beatitude (Matt. 5:11-12). This variation in which the last beatitude is longer and more complex is a feature frequently found in Second Temple Jewish literature, including the Dead Sea Scrolls. The nine beatitudes exhibit a tripartite 4—4—1 structure, with the two groups of four beatitudes forming a chiasmus. Clearly, the retention of the beatitudes in their Matthean arrangement and form but prefaced by a series of four "beatitudes" of varying forms results in a highly awkward compositional whole.

It is telling that John Welch, in his exposition of the ST, treated the material in 3 Nephi 12:1-2, which he entitled "Commending His Disciples unto the People," separately from the Matthean beatitudes in 3 Nephi 12:3-12, which he entitled "Blessings Promised" (Welch 1999, 56). Other LDS commentators similarly treat the new material separately from the Matthean beatitudes (e.g., Reynolds and Sjodahl 1955, 7:146-47; McConkie, Millet, and Top 1992, 62-64; cf. Skinner 2010). In a later chapter, Welch described 3 Nephi 12:1-2 as "two ecclesiastical beatitudes not found in the Sermon on the Mount" (138). In fact, there are four "beatitudes" there, not just two, though Welch's use of the term shows he recognized that they are intended to be comparable to the Matthean beatitudes that follow.

Brant Gardner recognized that 3 Nephi 12:1-2 presents four beatitudes (Gardner 2007, 5:397), but he understated the matter when he commented, "These additional blessing statements imitate but do not completely replicate the Old World form" (398). He suggested that because that "particular literary form was not part of Nephite culture," the author Nephi (whose record would have been the basis for Mormon's account) wrote down the opening beatitudes in a way that only partially corresponded to the Jewish beatitude form (398). This somewhat convoluted explanation in effect attributes 3 Nephi 12:1-2 to Mormon's reproduction of Nephi's inexact record of Jesus' speech to the Nephites, but attributes 3 Nephi 12:3 and following mainly to Joseph Smith's reproduction of Matthew's record of Jesus' speech to the Galileans.

Gardner's explanation is implausible for several reasons, not the least of which is that Joseph Smith repeated much of the new material in his revision of the Bible, in much the same form or lack thereof (Matt. 5:3-4 JST). This demonstrates that Joseph, at least, attributed the new sayings with their different structures to Jesus, not to one of the Nephite prophet scribes. In the light of the literary analysis

showing that the new sayings correspond neither to Jesus' speech patterns nor to Matthew's literary style, the presence of the same sayings in the ST and in the JST version of the SM reveals Joseph Smith to be their author.

Additional considerations further undermine Gardner's explanation and confirm that Joseph composed the new beatitudes himself. The Jewish beatitude form is quite simple and elegant, designed to be memorable, making it unlikely that Nephi would have had difficulty replicating them. Gardner's claim that the Nephites would not have been familiar with the beatitude form would seem to conflict with the fact that statements resembling the Matthean beatitudes in form appear earlier in the Book of Mormon:

> And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day,
> for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost. (1 Nephi 13:37)
> Therefore, blessed are they who will repent and hearken
>   unto the voice of the Lord their God;
> for these are they that shall be saved. (Helaman 12:3)

Moreover, both the style and the substance of the new beatitudes are the same as that found in the speeches compared earlier (see above, Table 46) that are attributed to Lehi's son Nephi in the sixth century BC (2 Nephi 31:13-21) and to Jesus immediately preceding the ST (3 Ne. 11:22b-39). Like 2 Nephi 12:1-2, both of those speeches emphasize baptism in water as a necessary condition of being baptized with "the Holy Ghost and fire." 2 Nephi 12:1-2 also exhibits the same cumbersome repetitious style documented in those two speeches. Thus, 2 Nephi 12:1-2 refers four times to baptism in water, twice to the Holy Ghost and fire, and three times to heeding or believing the words that the disciples will speak. Since the first-century Nephi cannot have had any influence on the wording of the speech attributed to his sixth-century BC forebear, the similarities in the speeches must be attributed to someone else. The obvious candidate is Joseph Smith.

7.5.2 "Filled with the Holy Ghost" (3 Nephi 12:6)

In the beatitude corresponding to Matthew 5:6, the ST quotes Jesus as saying that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be "filled *with the Holy Ghost*" (3 Ne. 12:6, emphasis added). Lutheran scholar Krister Stendahl argued that although the gloss seems plausible in English it is not in the Greek text of Matthew, where the word for "filled" is a form of *chortazō* rather than *pleroō*, the standard NT

verb for being filled with the Holy Spirit (Stendahl 1978, 142). In response, John Welch has argued that the Book of Mormon usage has precedent in the use of *chortazō* in the Greek translation of Psalm 17:15 (16:15 LXX), to which Welch argued Jesus was alluding (Welch 1999, 152-53). On the other hand, Brant Gardner did not comment on the Greek word but instead argued that "for righteousness" was itself a Matthean gloss and that "with the Holy Ghost," which presupposes the Matthean gloss, was Joseph's additional gloss (Gardner 2007, 5:402-404).

In support of Stendahl's contention is the fact that the verb *pleroō* and related forms are used in the Greek Bible in reference to being filled with or by a spirit or the Spirit, whereas the verb *chortazō* and related forms are never used in the Septuagint or in the NT with *pneuma* as its object. The Septuagint normally uses *empiplēmi*, a verb closely related to *pleroō*, in such statements (Exod. 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; Deut. 34:9; Isa. 11:2-3; Micah 3:8; Sir. 39:6; 48:12), with the verb *pleroō* so used just one time (Wis. 1:7). The verb *pleroō* is used in this way twice in the NT (Acts 13:52; Eph. 5:18). More common is the verb *pimplēmi* (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9) or the adjective *plērēs* (Luke 4:1; Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24). This lexical evidence is arguably weakened, however, by two considerations. (1) Except for Ephesians 5:18, Luke is the only author in the NT to speak of being filled with the Spirit. (2) The number of occurrences of this language in the Bible is small enough that some doubt must be admitted as to whether statements about being filled with the Spirit could not use a different verb such as *chortazō*.

A more pertinent consideration is the meaning of being "filled with the (Holy) Spirit" in the NT. This expression always connotes a controlling or empowering presence of the Spirit within the individual that prompts emboldened speech honouring to God (as can be seen by reading all of the NT texts cited in the previous paragraph). The "filling" of the Holy Spirit does not pertain to meeting someone's spiritual desire or need. Thus, the gloss in 3 Nephi 12:6 is not consistent with the NT usage of the expression "filled with the Holy Spirit." Moreover, in the context the verb rightly translated "shall be satisfied" (*chortasthēsontai*) in contemporary versions (ESV, NAB, NASB, NET, NLT) answers to the first line of the saying: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." That is, their desire and need for righteousness will be satisfied; God will give them the

righteousness for which they hunger and thirst. Thus, in the context "filled with the Holy Spirit" misses the point of the second line.

7.5.3 "For My Name's Sake" (3 Nephi 12:10)

In what is the eighth beatitude in Matthew, the phrase "for righteousness' sake" (Matt. 5:10 KJV) is replaced in the ST with the phrase "for my name's sake" (3 Ne. 12:10). John Welch argued that in this instance "Joseph's translation process produced a text that, interestingly, agrees with what appears to have been the Aramaic that Jesus originally spoke" (Welch 1999, 193). Specifically, Samuel Lachs had argued that the saying originally used the word *zadiq*, "righteous one," but was misread or misconstrued as *zedeq*, "righteousness," as reflected in the use of *dikaiosunē* in the Greek text of Matthew 5:10 (Lachs 1978, 101-102; Lachs 1987, 77). The original meaning of the statement, according to this theory, was that Jesus' disciples would be blessed if they were persecuted "for the sake of the Righteous One," that is, for his sake (see also Welch 2009, 62). Welch concluded that since the Book of Mormon reading "for his name's sake" is much closer in meaning to this proposed Aramaic original, "Joseph's inspired translation in this detail finds significant independent support from biblical studies" (Welch 1999, 194).

If Lachs were correct, however, one would have expected the saying in the Book of Mormon to read "for the sake of the Righteous One," not "for my name's sake." Having a meaning that is "closer" to a verbally very different expression is practically insignificant in terms of representing a lost authentic reading. It should also be clearly understood that the view of Matthew 5:10 that Welch cited attributed the supposed error to the author of the Gospel. Welch admitted this in an endnote, citing Georg Strecker's argument that the substitution was the work of the author of the Gospel because *dikaiosunē* was a favourite word of his (Welch 1999, 198 n. 31, citing Strecker 1988, 42). By this very same reasoning, one would have to regard *dikaiosunē* in Matthew 5:6 as a Matthean gloss, as Lachs does (Lachs 1987, 74) and as even Brant Gardner does (Gardner 2007, 5:403), yet the word "righteousness" appears in the corresponding verse in the ST (3 Ne. 12:6). Moreover, neither Lachs nor Strecker were suggesting that Jesus actually referred to himself as "the Righteous One"; their theory is that this was a designation of Jesus in the earliest, Aramaic-speaking church, as seen in the Book of Acts (3:14; 7:52;

22:14). This approach to the text of the ST, then, cannot validate the claim that the ST represents a more literally correct version of Jesus' sayings than the SM in the Greek Gospel of Matthew.

Because the proposal put forth by Lachs amounts to speculation, very few of the exegetical commentaries to appear since his article and book even mention the suggestion. The premise of Lachs's argument is that it is inthinkable that the Christians were persecuted for the sake of righteousness (Lachs 1987, 77). If, however, by "righteousness" was meant something beyond moral living—if it meant the countercultural way of relating to God and other people that was predicated on the inbreaking of the kingdom of heaven though Jesus the Messiah (Matt. 5:3-9; 6:25-33)—persecution might very well have been the result. In fact, the apostle Peter spoke of such persecution in terms that clearly echo the eighth Beatitude: "But even if you should suffer for righteousness [*dikaiosunēn*], you are blessed [*makarioi*]" (1 Peter 3:14 HCSB; see also vv. 16-17). There are several other connections between the passage in 1 Peter and the Beatitudes. These include Peter's admonition to seek and pursue peace (1 Peter 3:11b, cf. Matt. 5:9), his exhortation to respond to criticisms with gentleness (1 Peter 3:15b-16, cf. Matt. 5:5), and his warning that Christians should expect people to make false accusations against them (1 Peter 3:16, cf. Matt. 5:10). Thus Peter provides independent attestation to Matthew's version of Jesus' saying in the Beatitudes about being persecuted for the sake of righteousness.

There is nothing implausible about Jesus having used different words when speaking to the Nephites, or simply saying something quite different. It is also possible that Matthew paraphrased what Jesus had said in his Galilean sermon. However, the claim that Jesus said something more like what is found in 3 Nephi 12:10 than like what is found in Matthew 5:10 has no validity.

7.5.4 "The Light of This People" (3 Nephi 12:14-16)

One of the more subtle changes to the SM in the ST comes in Jesus' famous sayings about his disciples being "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14-16). In the ST, the Nephite disciples are described instead as "the light of **this people**" (3 Ne. 12:14), and they are told to "let your light so shine before **this people**" (12:16). LDS explanations for the difference between the SM and the ST at this point are

sometimes rather vague. John Welch, for example, suggested that these injunctions in the ST "seem to refer most clearly to relationships or exemplary roles of the believing covenant people" (Welch 1999, 139). Brant Gardner went in a quite different direction, attributing the difference to "Joseph's interaction with the text." He explained that since the world as a whole learned about Christianity from the Jews in the Old World and not from the Nephites in the New World, Joseph changed the wording to reflect his awareness of that fact (Gardner 2007, 5:412).

Gardner's explanation is likely close to the truth but is missing a key premise. Joseph Smith understood the Nephites to exist alone in the Americas, cut off from the rest of the nations of the world (see §6.4.2.2). In the narrative arc of the Book of Mormon, the Nephites and Lamanites were the sole inhabitants of the land from about 600 BC until the coming of the Europeans in the early modern era. To be consistent with this narrative context, then, Joseph felt it necessary to change Jesus' saying, since the Nephite believers were not going to be spreading the gospel of Christ to other peoples. Yet as was shown in chapter 6, this narrative context is entirely fictional, because Israelite peoples were not even a significant part of the population of the Western Hemisphere in ancient times. Therefore, this subtle change to the SM in the ST reflects the non-historical character of the Book of Mormon as a whole.

7.5.5 "Verily, Verily": A Johannine Element

A notable difference between the SM and the ST is the latter's more frequent use of the expression "verily I say unto you," including its use of the doubled "verily." Krister Stendahl argued in his seminal paper on the ST that its more frequent use of "verily" suggested a more "Johannine Jesus" than is found in the SM in Matthew (Stendahl 1978, 143, 145). Before considering what to make of this expression in the Book of Mormon, its use in the Bible merits close consideration.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Jesus' speech in the Gospels is the introductory clause "Amen I say to you," translated in the KJV as "Verily I say unto you." The clause occurs 74 times in the Gospels (excluding Matt. 18:19, which is textually debatable), always on the lips of Jesus, and in Greek always with the words *amēn legō* ("Amen I say") and either *humōn* ("you" plural, 65 times) or *soi* ("you"

singular, 9 times). Matthew has the clause 30 times, John 25 times, and the other Gospels far less often (Mark, 13 times; Luke, 6 times).

Two factors explain the differing proportions of the clause in the Gospels. The first is that Matthew and John have by far the most discourse material. The second is that Luke prefers to paraphrase or omit the "Amen" for his Gentile reader (cf. Jeremias 1967, 113). For example, in sayings where Matthew, Mark, or both have *amēn*, Luke uses *alēthōs* three times (Luke 9:27, cf. Matt. 16:28 and Mark 9:1; Luke 12:44, cf. Matt. 24:47; Luke 21:3, cf. Mark 12:43). Luke also uses *nai* ("yes") once where Matthew has *amēn* (Luke 11:51, cf. Matt. 23:36). Most frequently, Luke simply omits the word *amēn* (Luke 7:9, cf. Matt. 8:10; Luke 7:28, cf. Matt. 11:11; Luke 10:12, cf. Matt. 10:15; Luke 10:24, cf. Matt. 13:17; Luke 12:59, cf. Matt. 5:26; Luke 22:34, cf. Matt. 26:34 and Mark 14:30) or even the whole introductory clause (Luke 12:10, cf. Mark 3:28; Luke 16:17, cf. Matt. 5:18; Luke 18:24, cf. Matt. 19:23; Luke 21:6, cf. Matt. 24:2). Since Luke differs from both Mark and Matthew in some of these places, it is more likely that Luke has modified the unusual expression than that Matthew has added it (*contra* Davies and Allison 1988, 489).

In John alone, the word *amēn* is always doubled, so that the clause reads "Amen, amen I say to you." The fact that John doubles the "Amen" in *all* of the 25 sayings that he records proves that he is not reporting a different expression but the same expression with this variation. It is historically improbable in the extreme that Jesus used both forms and that the Synoptics happened to report only those sayings using the single Amen form while John happened to report only those sayings using the double Amen form. Furthermore, in two of the Johannine sayings of Jesus using the introductory clause, Matthew and Mark report the *same* saying but with only one "amen": Jesus' prophecies of Judas's betrayal (John 13:21, cf. Matt. 26:21; Mark 14:18) and of Peter's denials (John 13:38, cf. Matt. 26:34; Mark 14:30). Thus, either the Synoptics have shortened Jesus' formulaic expression or John has expanded it. Neither form is "wrong" since the Gospels do not purport to be giving Jesus' *ipsissima verbi* (see Bock 1996). Still, it is worth asking which form Jesus himself used.

Biblical scholars who comment on the matter (conservative or not) agree that the Synoptic form is more likely to reflect Jesus' actual wording (see, e.g., Jeremias 1967, 112-13; Bruce 1983, 62; Keener 2003, 1:488). Three reasons may be given

for this judgment. (1) The Synoptics are almost universally recognized as having been written earlier (e.g., Blomberg 2001, 41-43, 53-54), so that it is more likely that their wording is closer to Jesus' own usage. (2) For a variety of reasons, even scholars who defend the historical reliability of the Gospel of John agree that the discourses reflect the author's own style to a significant extent (e.g., Blomberg 2001, 51-52; Keener 2003, 1:53-80). (3) It is highly unlikely that three different authors would simplify Jesus' unique speech pattern in the same way, but it is quite plausible that one author would intensify it. Therefore, it may be accepted as highly probable that Jesus' speech form used a single "amen" and that John doubled it.

The Greek *amēn* occurs only three times in the LXX translation of the canonical OT (1 Chron. 16:36; Neh. 5:13; 8:6) and only a handful of places in the OT Apocrypha. It is a transliteration of the Hebrew *'āmēn*, an adverbial form related to the verb meaning to confirm, verify, be faithful to, have faith in, etc., depending on grammatical form and on context. The form occurs in 13 passages and in 24 verses in the Hebrew Bible (Num. 5:22; Deut. 27:15-26; 1 Kings 1:36; 1 Chron. 16:36; Neh. 5:13; 8:6; Ps. 41:13; 72:19; 89:52; 106:48; Isa. 65:16; Jer. 11:5; 28:6). In 19 of these 24 verses *'āmēn* is translated in the Septuagint with the Greek word *genoito*, "Let it be" or "So be it" (besides the three exceptions noted above, see also Isa. 65:16 and Jer. 28:6). In all but one occurrence the word is used in a covenantal, ritual context, as a response expressing solemn agreement to the divine word spoken in the rite. One text that might be cited as an exception is Jeremiah 28:6 (35:6 LXX), where Jeremiah says "Amen!" to a prophecy delivered by another prophet named Hananiah (28:1-5). However, even here the word is spoken in a ritual context, since the prophets were speaking in the temple in the presence of the priests and the people (28:1). The one clear exception is striking: in Isaiah 65:16, Yahweh is twice called "the God of Amen" (*bē'lōhê 'āmēn*).

There are several occurrences of the doubled "Amen, amen" as ritual responses in the Hebrew text of the OT: Num. 5:22 (*'āmēn 'āmēn*, translated *genoito genoito*, "So be it, so be it"); Ps. 41:13; 72:19; 89:52 (*'āmēn wᵉ 'āmēn*, "amen and amen," also translated *genoito genoito*, "So be it, so be it," Ps. 40:14; 71:19; 88:53 LXX); and Neh. 8:6 (*'āmēn 'āmēn*, simplified to a single Greek *amēn* in the LXX). These OT texts may offer some explanation for the Johannine doubling "amen, amen," though there seems to be no obvious correlation with any specific text.

Perhaps a connection is intended to Psalms 72 and 89, both of which end with the doubled "amen, amen," and both of which are important Messianic psalms.

For many years it has been widely held that Jesus' use of "amen" in the Gospels "*is without analogy in the whole of Jewish literature and in the rest of the New Testament*" (Jeremias 1967, 112, emphasis his). Jeremias explained, "Whereas according to idiomatic Jewish usage the word *amen* is used to affirm, endorse or appropriate the words of another person, in the tradition of the saying of Jesus it is used *without exception* to introduce and endorse Jesus' own words" (112, emphasis his). Mormon scholar Eric Huntsman agreed that "Jesus' use of the term [*amen*] at the *beginning* of a statement seems to have been unique, the implication being that everything he said following it was true" (Huntsman 2010, 95). Somewhat surprisingly, despite the plethora of ancient texts and artefacts discovered and analysed in modern times, only two sources are typically cited as possible exceptions. Brief comments may be made about each of these.

Two texts in the Long Recension (A) of the pseudepigraphic work the *Testament of Abraham* have been cited as exceptions (for the Greek text with an English translation, see Stone 1972). In the first of these (8.7), God prefaces his statement with the words *amēn legō soi hoti* ("Amen I say to you that"), exactly what is found in one of Jesus' amen sayings (Matt. 26:34, par. Mark 14:30). In the second (20.2), Death begins his statement to Abraham with the words *amēn amēn legō soi en alētheia theou* ("Amen, amen I say to you in the truth of God"). The addition of the prepositional phrase *en alētheia theou* marks this text as different in form than any of the Gospel sayings, yet it is striking that the text uses the doubled amen, just as the Gospel of John does (cf. John 3:11). David Turner stated that these references are "probably the only clear Second Temple parallel to the prefatory *amēn*" (Turner 2008, 163 n. 10; similarly Nolland 2005, 219), but it is far from clear that the references are really from the Second Temple period. Everyone agrees that the book *began* as a Jewish text written no earlier than the second century BC and no later than about AD 115, most likely sometime in the first century AD (Charlesworth 1976, 70; Sanders 1983; Allison 2003, 38-39; so also LDS scholar J. Ludlow 2002, 5). However, the book passed through the hands of Christian authors who made many revisions, and the relation of the two recensions to the lost original remains a matter of debate. Dale Allison, the author of a major commentary on the

Testament of Abraham, has shown that much of the language and at least a good measure of the content exhibits early medieval Christian influence (Allison 2003, 28-40). This judgment applies specifically to the "Amen I say to you" references (100). Unfortunately, Ludlow offered no comment on those references in his study.

The other possible exception is in a very different source: a seventh-century BC letter written on a piece of broken pottery (an ostracon) by a poor man appealing to the governor for whom he worked to have his confiscated coat returned. J. Naveh, the antiquities scholar who first reported on the find, translated lines 10-12, "And all my brethren will witness on my behalf, they who reap with me in the heat [of the sun], my brethren will witness on my behalf 'Verily,' I am free of gu[ilt. Restore] my garment" (Naveh 1960, 135). According to Naveh, "the word *'mn* ('it is so') is apparently indicative of evidence given under oath" (133). John Strugnell, however, has argued that the text should be punctuated, "…my brethren will witness on my behalf. Verily, I am free of guilt" (cf. Strugnell 1974, 178). He claimed, "This is the only acceptable translation" (179), but offered no grammatical or syntactical evidence to support his claim. At most, the text is a possible example of a non-responsive usage of *'āmēn*. If so, it is by all accounts an outlier, one found in a non-literary text, and one that by no means is comparable in meaning to Jesus' authoritative expression "Amen I say to you."

The conclusion stands, then, that the introductory clause is a unique speech form originating with Jesus. It is used in the Bible only by Jesus when speaking face to face with other people on earth. Christ's amen statements occur in a variety of contexts and can explain, expand on, summarize, intensify, or augment preceding statements, or they can simply present a claim or revelation in a particularly emphatic way (Gibbs 2000, 108). In all such statements, the introductory clause expresses Jesus' supreme, unqualified confidence in what he is saying. The strong assertion of authority through the use of the clause generally marks statements that Jesus' hearers might find controversial, surprising, or even shocking. Rather than a response to the word of God, Jesus' "amen" *is* the word of God unmediated through a mere prophet, priest, or teacher. It is an expression of his unique, divine authority, of a different order than that of the Jewish scribes (Matt. 7:28-29). It was no doubt because of Jesus' unique use of "amen" that the Book of Revelation called Christ "the Amen" (Rev. 3:14, cf. Isa. 65:16).

With this biblical background established, the usage of the clause in the Book of Mormon, especially in the ST, may now be considered. The SM has five occurrences of the introductory clause (Matt. 5:18, 26a; 6:2, 5, 16), which the ST retains unchanged. However, the ST has the clause an additional eight times. In five instances the clause is added to a saying already in the SM (3 Ne. 12:13, 14, 32, 34; 14:1), while in the other three instances the clause is part of a new saying not found in the SM (3 Ne. 12:20, 26b; 13:1). In seven of these eight new occurrences of the clause in the ST, the word "verily" is doubled in the same way as in the Gospel of John (3 Ne. 12:20 is the sole exception).

The Book of Mormon attributes to Jesus sayings using this introductory clause outside the ST as well. It appears a total of 46 times in 3 Nephi 9-27, including the 13 occurrences in the ST. These 46 occurrences in the ST are divided fairly evenly between those with one "verily" and those with two. In addition, the Book of Mormon reports the Lord using the introductory clause when speaking to a prophet in the late second century BC (Mosiah 26:31). That occurrence is out of sync with the biblical record, in which the clause is a feature of Jesus's speech only while he was physically present on the earth. Finally, in an especially egregious mistake, the Book of Mormon narrator (Mormon) uses it in his comment about a first-century man named Moroni (Alma 48:17). For the mortal narrator to use this clause is a serious mistake in the text, because in the Bible not only is it used only by Jesus (and only when he is physically on the earth), it reflects his unique, divine authority as God the Son incarnate.

Other than the mistakes in Mosiah 26:31 and especially Alma 48:17, there are two main problems with the use of the introductory clause in the speeches of Jesus in 3 Nephi, including the ST. The first problem is that the clause is used far too frequently. The text of 3 Nephi 9-27, within which the book's 46 occurrences of the clause all lie, is roughly seven-eighths the length of Matthew 5-26, within which Matthew's 30 occurrences all lie; yet 3 Nephi has half again as many occurrences as Matthew (which itself has the most of any Gospels). Recall also that 3 Nephi 20-25 consists largely of lengthy quotations from the OT (see 6.5.6), which means that in the speeches of Jesus, excluding those lengthy quotations, the number is even more disproportionately high. The ST is thus fairly representative: it increases the number of occurrences from five to thirteen, almost triple in the same stretch of text.

What makes this increased usage suspicious is that in Jesus' usage in the Gospels, the clause is used judiciously to introduce solemn, troubling, or surprising assertions. This does not appear to be typically the case with the added uses in the ST or in many of its other occurrences in 3 Nephi. Consider, for example, the statement added in the ST to the beginning of what is Matthew 6 in the NT: "Verily, verily, I say that I would that ye should do alms unto the poor" (3 Ne. 13:1). There does not seem to be any rationale for the clause being used here. In most places in 3 Nephi its use seems to be simply another example of the repetitious style of the speeches throughout the Book of Mormon (see, for especially strong examples, 3 Ne. 15:19-21 and 21:1-3).

The second problem is that the Book of Mormon frequently uses the doubled "verily, verily," which, as explained above, is a distinctive feature of the Johannine style of reporting Jesus' speech. The problem here is not merely that Jesus almost certainly used the single-amen form when he spoke in Galilee and Judea. As was stated previously, it is not to be expected that ancient authors would present the *ipsissima verbi* of Jesus or a strictly literal translation of his words. The point is that the doubling reflects the Book of Mormon's dependence on the NT. Where the ST follows the text of the SM with little change, the single-amen form is consistently used; where the ST drastically departs from the SM and uses the introductory clause it almost always uses the double-amen form. This means that the double-amen sayings in the ST demonstrate the influence of the style of the Gospel of John on those specific sayings, not simply Joseph Smith's own stylistic preference, since otherwise the ST would consistently use one form or the other. In short, the evidence of the amen sayings in the ST provide further clear proof that Joseph Smith based the ST on the SM as it appears in Matthew, revising the text with added lines and sayings that exhibit Johannine influence. The ST is not a report of Jesus' speech as heard by a first-century Nephite and recorded by the fifth-century author Mormon, but a speech created by a modern author based on the Matthean SM augmented with sayings influenced by the language of John.

7.5.6 No Mention of Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20)

At a key turning point in the SM, Jesus tells his disciples, "except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall

in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20 KJV). John Welch has cited this text as an important omission in the ST. He suggests that the line's pointed criticism of the Pharisees reflects an "anti-Pharisaism" that was "one of the main tendencies of Matthew" (Welch 1999, 140). In effect, Welch suggested that the ST omits the reference to scribes and Pharisees because that reference originated from Matthew's anti-Pharisaic polemic, not from the historical Jesus.

Welch's explanation is deeply flawed in more ways than one. All four Gospels report Jesus engaged in controversies with Pharisees. The term *Pharisee(s)* occurs 29 times in Matthew, 12 times in Mark, 27 times in Luke, and 20 times in John— numbers that are all roughly proportional to the lengths of the books. One of the few explicit references to Jesus being angry is found in Mark's account of one of those controversies (Mark 3:6). Luke quotes Jesus speaking harshly against the Pharisees in a series of woes that are paralleled in Matthew (Matt. 23:13-36; Luke 11:37-54). John reports Jesus telling the Pharisees that they were spiritually blind (John 9:40-41). All three of the Synoptic Gospels also refer repeatedly to scribes as opponents of Jesus, often though not always conjoined with the Pharisees (the term *scribes* occurs 142 times in those three Gospels, far more frequently than the term *Pharisees*). One cannot selectively question the historical authenticity of Matthew 5:20 as a Matthean anti-Pharisaic gloss without implicitly raising questions about the historicity of much of the narrative in all four Gospels, which neither Welch nor most other Mormons would be inclined to do.

A second problem for Welch's view is that the Joseph Smith Translation retains Jesus' criticism of Pharisaic righteousness: "For I say unto you, except your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:22 JST). In fact, the JST even adds another criticism of the scribes and Pharisees: "Beholdest thou the Scribes, and the Pharisees, and the Priests, and the Levites? They teach in their synagogues, but do not observe the law, nor the commandments; and all have gone out of the way, and are under sin" (Matt. 7:6 JST). It seems clear that Welch's view directly conflicts with Joseph Smith's own supposedly inspired revision of the SM.

Third, removing the one explicit reference to the Pharisees by name in the SM does not result in a text unconcerned with the Pharisees. As LDS scholar Matthew Grey has observed, in the SM "Jesus' teachings on law and religious

practices are directly related to Pharisaic teachings on matters such as divorce, oaths, fasting, and prayer" (Grey 2010, 174). The omission of any explicit reference to the scribes and Pharisees in the ST, though superficially consistent with its different audience, actually exposes a serious problem—arguably a fatal flaw—in the ST. It is a speech ostensibly addressed to people who had no contact with the Pharisees and were culturally and geographically radically separated from them, yet much of the speech is a critique of Pharisaic religiosity. This point will be developed in some detail later in this chapter.

There is a simpler and more cogent explanation for the omission of the critical reference to the Pharisees in Matthew 5:20. Joseph Smith knew that there were no Pharisees in the OT, and reasoned (correctly) that there would be no Pharisees in Nephite society. As LDS scholar Brant Gardner noted, "'Pharisees' would be completely out of place in the New World where there were none" (Gardner 2007, 5:417). Joseph Smith therefore omitted Jesus' reference to the scribes and Pharisees as inapplicable to the Nephite audience of the ST. Those who accept the historical authenticity of the ST, of course, might say that since there were no Pharisees among the Nephites, Jesus naturally omitted any reference to them in the ST. As has just been explained, however, what the Book of Mormon in effect reports is that Jesus delivered a speech to the Nephites that critiqued the Pharisees' religious teachings and practices even though there were no Pharisees in Nephite society. This facet of the SM, and of the ST insofar as it largely repeats Jesus' critique of Pharisaism in the SM, points once again to Joseph Smith as the one responsible for the omission of Matthew 5:20.

7.5.7 It Is Written: Recasting the Antitheses (Matthew 5:21-48)

One of the most controversial questions in the study of the SM concerns whether the six so-called "antitheses" in Matthew 5:21-48 are comparing Jesus' teaching with that of the Old Testament (OT), and if so what the nature of that comparison is (clarifying, closing loopholes, superseding, transcending, contravening, etc.). A critical element in this controversy is the use of "you have heard that it was said" with some variations to introduce each of the six antitheses (Matt. 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). Exegetes debate whether these introductory clauses refer to the words of the Torah per se (e.g., heard read aloud in synagogue) or to

oral interpretive comments on the Torah by Jewish scribes. If the latter is correct, then Jesus was comparing his teaching with that of the scribes and Pharisees, not with the teaching of the Torah in and of itself. The issue is complicated by the fact that two of the introductory clauses are followed by what appear to be simple Scripture quotations (Matt. 5:27, 38), two are followed by loose paraphrases of Scripture texts (5:31, 33), and two are followed by Scripture quotations and interpretive glosses (5:21, 43). All of the citations reflect texts in the Torah, although again only two of the six are verbally equivalent to the corresponding OT text.

The ST in the Book of Mormon appears to eliminate this ambiguity by rewording the six introductory clauses so that they all refer to what is written (see Table 47). In the first of these clauses, the Book of Mormon retains the wording of the KJV but then adds an explanatory clause, "and it is also written before you" (3 Ne. 12:21). The other five introductory clauses are simply rewritten to eliminate "heard" and "said," replacing all of them with some variation of "it is written."

Table 47. Introductions to the Antitheses in Matthew and 3 Nephi	
Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43 (literal translation)	*3 Nephi 12:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43*
You have heard that it was said to/by the ancients	Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, and it is also written before you
You have heard that it was said	Behold, it is written by them of old time
It was said	It hath been written
Again, you have heard that it was said to/by the ancients	And again it is written
You have heard that it was said	And behold, it is written
You have heard that it was said	And behold, it is written also

Welch's explanation of the difference is that the Nephite culture differed from the Jewish culture of the Old World in how it viewed the Torah. The Jews in Galilee and Judea accorded significant authority to the oral traditions of interpretations of "the written Torah," whereas "the Nephites saw the law primarily as a written body" so that an appeal to oral law "would not have carried as much weight as a reference to the written law" (Welch 1999, 132). Gardner agreed with Welch (whom he quotes

on the matter), saying that "the New World lacked the particular long oral tradition of the Old World to which Jesus referred." At the end of the same paragraph, however, Gardner qualified his statement, suggesting that Jesus might have been referring to the written text in the SM as well (Gardner 2007, 5:421).

The explanation that the SM refers to oral traditions while the ST refers to the written Torah is unworkable. The "written law" interpretation entails that Jesus was comparing his teaching to that of the written Torah in order to show that his teaching represented a higher level of righteousness without negating or contravening the Torah. The "oral law" interpretation of the antitheses entails that Jesus was critiquing that oral law, not simply comparing it to his own teaching. If Jesus was critiquing the oral law in his Galilean sermon, it is not plausible that he would say largely the same things to the Nephites but for a very different purpose.

It may be mentioned that the evidence of the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) is ambiguous. It has references to what was "written" in three of the antitheses: "Behold, it is written by them of old time…. It hath been written…. Again, it hath been written by them of old time" (Matt. 5:29, 35, 37 JST, cf. Matt. 5:27, 31, 33). The other three follow the KJV (Matt. 5:23, 40, 45 JST, cf. Matt. 5:21, 38, 43).

The usual LDS view of the antitheses, both in the SM and in the ST, is that Jesus was explaining how his teaching on morality expressed a higher standard than that of the Law of Moses. On this view, Jesus was not abrogating the Torah but simply calling for people to go above and beyond the demands of the Torah. Eric Huntsman, in a well-written exposition of the LDS view of the antitheses, explains that "Jesus compared the demands of the law of the gospel with the requirements of the Mosaic law. In each, the Master cited an earlier proposition of the law, a thesis, and made an authoritative counterproposition, or antithesis, that called disciples to a higher standard of belief, motivation, and observance" (Huntsman 2010, 93). In the antitheses Jesus was "neither nullifying nor replacing the law, but rather intensifying it and helping the believer better fulfill its intent" (94).

The main reason for understanding Jesus' argument to be comparing his teaching with that of the OT Law is that what the audience is reminded they had "heard" appears to consist of quotations from, or at least paraphrases of, passages in the legal texts of the Torah. Ulrich Luz explained the reasoning well: "An interpretation in terms of tradition rather than the OT is improbable, however,

because the content of the second and fifth, but probably also the first, third, and fourth theses, is literally, or at least in its meaning, an OT statement and not a rabbinic interpretation" (Luz 2007, 229). However, Luz ended up qualifying his view by suggesting that in Jesus' culture the Jews had not yet fully arrived at the place of making a clear distinction "between the written and the oral Torah, or between the Torah and its interpretation" (230). If so, Jesus would have been contrasting his teaching with the OT Law not as written, but as interpreted by other Jewish teachers.

The fact that the antitheses are immediately preceded in the SM by the call to a righteousness that surpassed that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:20) must be given its full force. Jesus was contrasting the righteousness of the kingdom with the righteousness of the Jewish interpreters of his culture. In the case of the citations that verbally match OT texts (forbidding adultery and stipulating an eye for an eye, Matt. 5:27, 38), Jesus' argument appears to be that the scribes and Pharisees erroneously interpreted those commandments as requiring nothing more than external conformity to their words. Craig Keener has paraphrased Jesus' meaning as follows: "You understand the Bible to mean only this, but I offer a fuller interpretation" (Keener 2009a, 182). Thus, in each case "Jesus counters ('but I say to you') a scribal or Pharisaic interpretation of a given passage of legal scripture" (Evans 2012b, 120).

Luz is probably correct that "on the basis both of the rabbinic exegetical usage and of Matthean usage, however, *errethē* is most likely to be understood as *passivum divinum* for God's speaking in the scriptures" (Luz 2007, 230). The slippage is not in what was "said" by God but in what Jesus' audience had "heard" regarding what God had said. The Book of Mormon, by revising the antitheses to contrast Jesus' requirements with what was "written," misconstrues the purpose and context of Jesus' teaching in this part of the sermon. Later in this chapter (§7.6.7), Jesus' teaching in the six antitheses are examined in detail. It is shown there that Jesus was indeed critiquing interpretations of the Torah by scribes and Pharisees.

7.5.8 No Gift at the Altar (Matthew 5:23-24)

Jesus' saying about being reconciled to one's brother before presenting a gift at the altar (Matt. 5:23-24) is replaced in the ST with a saying that uses much of the same language but eliminates the references to the gift and the altar (see Table 48).

The omission and replacement of these elements of the saying require some explanation, because Jesus is speaking right outside a temple (3 Ne. 11:1) in the Israelite religious tradition. Presumably the temple had an altar where gifts were offered. Why, then, are these elements, familiar to the Nephites, omitted in the ST?

Table 48. Altar and Gift Eliminated in the Sermon at the Temple	
Matthew 5:23-24 KJV	*3 Nephi 12:23-24*
Therefore if **thou bring thy gift to the altar**, and **there** rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; **Leave there thy gift before the altar, and** go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and **offer thy gift**.	Therefore, if **ye shall come unto me**, **or shall desire to come unto me**, and rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, Go thy way **unto thy brother, and** first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come **unto me with full purpose of heart,** and **I will receive you**.

Welch briefly noted the difference between the sayings in the SM and the ST (Welch 1999, 134) but offered no explanation. Gardner does attempt an explanation: "In the New World, the people appear to have had readier access to the temple and fewer purity restrictions than in the Old World. Furthermore, the Messiah is standing before them. The risen Savior is the Lord of the temple and its rites, so it is quite appropriate that his presence, not the physical building, would be the focus" (Gardner 2007, 5:423). Gardner's explanation entails that Jesus' saying here would have relevance only for the few days that he was physically present with the Nephites, which would be quite out of keeping with the context. The sayings in the ST (3 Ne. 12:23-24) are in the middle of a unit of material in which Jesus is teaching that true righteousness means not merely refraining from murder but overcoming anger with reconciliation (3 Ne. 12:21-26, cf. Matt. 5:21-26). When the ST quotes Jesus as telling the Nephites to reconcile with their brethren before they "come unto" him, to "come unto" Jesus is not limited to approaching him while he is standing physically in their presence, but refers more generally to coming to Christ in repentance and faith. Thus Gardner's rationalization for the change simply does not work in context.

The correct explanation is quite simple: the Book of Mormon has already quoted Jesus as telling the Nephites to cease offering the sacrifices stipulated in the

Mosaic covenant because his death was the final sacrifice for sin (3 Ne. 9:19-22). Given the post-crucifixion, post-resurrection context and Christ's explicit command ending the sacrificial system, to speak of the Nephites bringing offerings to the altar then or in the future would not be appropriate.

Although the omission of the saying about the gift at the altar is contextually appropriate, the ST does not simply omit the saying but instead replaces it with a saying that uses as much of the wording of Matthew 5:23-24 KJV as possible while recasting the saying for the new covenantal context. As can be seen from Table 48, the saying in 3 Nephi 12:23-24 retains 24 of the 43 words of Matthew 5:23-24 (in the same forms and in the same order). The 19 words that are dropped are replaced by 27 words, so that the new saying is just eight words longer. (It would have been only one word longer, but for a corrective variation on the first new clause in 3 Nephi 12:23, "or shall desire to come unto me.") It is clear from a comparison of the two versions that the ST saying is a *revision* of the SM saying. Whoever composed the new saying deliberately constructed it using the old saying as the verbal scaffolding, deviating from the older wording as little as possible while making the contextually needed changes. There would be no reason, of course, for Jesus to have bothered doing so, and Mormon presumably did not have Matthew's Gospel and so would not have done so. The only plausible explanation left is that Joseph Smith rewrote Matthew 5:23-24 to fit the new context.

The conclusion that 3 Nephi 12:23-24 was Joseph Smith's rewrite of Matthew 5:23-24 is confirmed by the language used to replace the words omitted. Two expressions stand out here. The first is "come unto me," which appears three times in the new saying but nowhere in the SM. This expression has already occurred three times earlier in the ST (3 Ne. 12:3, 19, 20) and is attributed to Jesus a total of 17 times in 3 Nephi. Yet it occurs in only four sayings of Jesus in the NT Gospels (Matt. 11:28; Matt. 19:14/Mark 10:14/Luke 18:16; John 6:45/6:65; 7:37). In addition, "come unto me" is found 13 times in the Book of Mormon outside 3 Nephi and, most telling, eight times in Doctrine & Covenants (D&C 7:4; 10:67; 19:41; 45:5, 46; 84:47, 50; 93:1). The other noteworthy expression in 3 Nephi 12:23-24 is "full purpose of heart," an expression found nowhere in the Bible at all but six times in the Book of Mormon (2 Ne. 31:13; Jacob 6:5; Mosiah 7:33; 3 Ne. 10:6; 12:24; 18:32) and three times in Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 17:1; 18:27, 28). This data strongly confirms

that the language used to rewrite Matthew 5:23-24 in 3 Nephi 12:23-24 was characteristic of Joseph Smith's religious language.

Finally, the revision of the saying to omit the elements of the altar and the gift obscures the OT background of the discourse unit of which this saying is a part. Matthew 5:23-24 is part of a discourse unit on murder and anger (Matt. 5:21-26), the first of six units exemplifying Jesus' teaching as it related to the Torah. Here Jesus was commenting on the commandment prohibiting murder (v. 21) and warning that "everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment" (v. 22). The person who is offering "a gift at the altar" should leave it there and go be reconciled to his brother before offering the gift (vv. 23-24). Dale Allison has shown that Jesus' teaching here alludes to the famous story of the first murder, that of Cain killing his brother Abel (Allison 2005, 65-78). Genesis emphasizes that Abel was Cain's brother (mentioned seven times, Gen. 4:2, 8-11), explains that both men had presented offerings to the Lord (4:3-5a), and notes that Cain had become very angry (4:5b, 6). Jesus likewise emphasizes that the other person is one's brother (mentioned four times), describes a scenario in which one is presenting an offering, and draws a close connection between anger and murder (Matt. 5:21-24). Removing the references to the gift and the altar obscures the OT background to Jesus' teaching in this discourse unit. This is yet further confirmation that 3 Nephi 12:23-24 was a clumsily done revision of Matthew 5:23-24.

7.5.9 Paying the Uttermost Senine (3 Nephi 12:25-26)

Immediately following Joseph Smith's revision of Matthew 5:23-24, the ST continues with sayings clearly built on the sayings in Matthew 5:25-26 but also containing notable differences (3 Nephi 12:25-26). These differences all pertain to the legal trouble associated with an unpaid debt.

The first difference is that the description of the complex "due process" reflected in the sayings in the SM is streamlined in the ST. The SM reports Jesus warning to settle one's debt "lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison" (Matt. 5:25 KJV). Here "the adversary" is the one who has a legal complaint against the other, specifically regarding an unpaid debt. In the cultural context of first-century Jewish culture in Galilee, Jesus was urging the debtor to make payment arrangements

satisfactory to the person owed, before they came before a judge who might rule that the debtor was to pay the debt in debtor's prison. The "officer" was the man responsible to conduct the debtor to the debtor's prison.

The ST has the simpler warning, "lest at any time he shall get thee, and thou shalt be cast into prison" (3 Ne. 12:25). The change would seem to eliminate the due process involving the disposition of the case by a judge and the role of the "officer" in taking the debtor to debtor's prison. However, the streamlined language is probably due to the fact that an earlier passage in the Book of Mormon has already described the very same process, and did so more elaborately than Matthew 5:25:

> Now if a man owed another, and he would not pay that which he did owe, he was complained of to the judge; and the judge executed authority, and sent forth officers that the man should be brought before him; and he judged the man according to the law and the evidences which were brought against him, and thus the man was compelled to pay that which he owed, or be stripped, or be cast out from among the people as a thief and a robber. (Alma 11:2)

Note that all of the characters in Jesus' saying as found in the SM are here in Alma 11: the complainant, the debtor, the judge, and the officer. In Alma 11, however, the debtor is not sent to debtor's prison, but is administered some punishment or retribution. In 3 Nephi 12:25-26, imprisonment is the punishment meted out to the debtor. More on this point will be said below.

The second difference is that the monetary unit mentioned in the next sentence is changed from "farthing" (Matt. 5:26 KJV) to "senine" (3 Ne. 12:26a). The term *farthing*, of course, was not ancient but an English unit of currency contemporaneous with the translators of the KJV. They used the term because it denoted the smallest unit of currency familiar to its readers, just as the Greek term *kodrantēs*, a transliteration of the Greek word *quadrans*, which denoted what was at the time the smallest unit of Roman currency. The *lepton*, mentioned in the parallel version of the saying in Luke 12:59 and in reference to the widow's "mites" (Mark 12:42; Luke 21:2), was a Greek coin worth half of a quadrans (*ABD* 1:1087). Thus both Matthew and Luke use a term emphasizing the minuteness of the coin's value, with Matthew using the name of a specifically Roman coin. More recent English versions typically translate *kodrantēs* using the word *penny* (e.g., ESV, HCSB, NET, NIV, NKJV, NRSV). Instead of using an English term that would be familiar to modern readers, Joseph Smith used the term *senine*, unknown in any language (and therefore, presumably, it is being represented as a transliteration of the

"Reformed Egyptian" word on the gold plates). Ron Huggins suggested, quite reasonably, that the ST uses the word *senine* in place of *farthing* (Matt. 5:26; 3 Ne. 12:26) "to introduce verisimilitude," by using a term that appeared earlier in the Book of Mormon for a Nephite unit of currency (Huggins 1997, 146). The question is whether these references to senines are mere verisimilitude or contextually and historically plausible.

The Book of Mormon introduces the senine in Alma 11, in the same passage explaining the process by which a man guilty of unpaid debts was punished (Alma 11:2). Immediately following that explanation, the text describes the judge's fee for his work in reviewing and rendering judgment in the case: "And the judge received for his wages according to his time—a senine of gold for a day, or a senum of silver, which is equal to a senine of gold; and this is according to the law which was given" (11:3). The text then launches into a detailed description of the Nephite monetary system, which it describes in terms of "the different pieces of their gold, and of their silver, according to their value" (11:4a). The expressions "pieces of gold" and "pieces of silver," of course, denote money, some kind of currency or monetary units exchanged for goods or services. The language would have been very familiar to any English reader in Joseph Smith's day as biblical language: the KJV Bible frequently referred to "pieces of silver" (Gen. 20:16; 37:28; 45:22; Josh. 24:32; Judg. 9:4; 16:5; 1 Sam. 2:36; 2 Kings 6:25; Ps. 68:30; Song of Sol. 8:11; Hos. 3:2; Zech. 11:12, 13; Matt. 26:15; 27:3, 5, 9; Luke 15:8; Acts 19:19) and in one place to "pieces of gold" (2 Kings 5:5). In Webster's 1828 dictionary the relevant definition of *piece* is "a coin; as a *piece* of eight" (N. Webster 1828, 2:35). The reference to "*different* pieces" of gold and silver with different, specific "names" (Alma 11:4) can only mean that the Nephites had differentiated pieces of gold and silver, with each different piece assigned a standardized value. In short, the text is referring to precious metal currency, whether coins or in some other form.

The text continues by explaining that the Nephites used their own terminology and a different system of measure than the Jews, having "altered their reckoning and their measure…in every generation, until the reign of the judges" (11:4b). What this last statement clearly means is that the Nephite monetary system was a distant descendant of the Jewish system, with its names, measures, and "reckoning" having become very different over the course of so many generations (about five centuries).

It may be noted in passing that this is one of the many statements in the Book of Mormon that appears to be aimed at modern readers. It would not make much sense to interrupt a historical narrative about the Nephites to explain to Nephites the origins of the Nephite monetary system.

Care has been taken to establish that Alma 11:4 refers to a monetary system using pieces of silver and gold as standardized currency because Mormon scholars are aware of the fact that no ancient people in the Americas used precious metal currency. Earlier editions of the Book of Mormon referred to Nephite "coins" in the chapter heading to Alma 11, but it now refers to "the Nephite monetary system" instead. Daniel Peterson has argued, "The text of the Book of Mormon never mentions the word 'coin' or any variant of it…. Alma 11 is almost certainly talking about standardized weights of metal—a historical step toward coinage, but not yet the real thing" (Peterson 1993, 55). What Alma 11:4 says, though, is that the Nephites assigned different names and values to different *pieces*, not to different *weights*, even though the text indicates how much grain some of the pieces could buy (contra Gardner 2007, 4:183). One need not be particular about the currency taking the form of "coins"; the text does not indicate the shape of the pieces or indicate whether they were stamped with any markings. Nevertheless, the text clearly does refer to precious metal currency in a system of different pieces carrying different names and assigned standardized monetary values. This is a description of a monetary system, Gardner's denial notwithstanding (Gardner 2007, 54:179).

Setting aside the use of the term "coins," the fact is that ancient peoples in the Old World did not develop any sort of precious metal currency. Metallurgy did not even develop in Mesoamerica until roughly AD 600-800 (Hosler 2001, 454-55). It was not until the Postclassical period that societies in Mesoamerica were using goods "in a manner similar to money in modern economies," and even then such "money-like goods" consisted of cacao beans, jade beads, and (among the Aztecs) "quills filled with gold dust" (Blanton 2001, 249-50), not pieces of gold or silver. The description of a Nephite monetary system in the first century BC utilizing different pieces of silver and gold is therefore a clear anachronism.

The troubles with the reference to "the uttermost senine" in the ST do not stop with the anachronism of a New World precious metal currency system. The passage names twelve different units of monetary measure in all (Alma 11:5-19; see Hauglid

2003). There is evidently no reason for the description other than to put the value of a senine in a larger economic context. Thus, of these twelve monetary units, only the senine is mentioned outside Alma 11 (there are references to "six onties" in the chapter, Alma 11:22, 25). Besides the reference in the ST in 3 Nephi 12:26, the senine is mentioned outside Alma 11 only once, in a statement about Alma not being paid even one senine (Alma 30:33). It cannot be a coincidence that the passage that introduces the senine does so in the context of describing a scenario that appears to be based on the words of Matthew 5:25, as explained above.

Although the senine is identified as the smallest unit of gold currency or measure, it is far from the smallest unit of Nephite currency. According to Alma 11:3, 15-17, a senine is equivalent to eight leahs of silver, making the leah the smallest unit of Nephite currency (acknowledged in Welch 1999, 130). More importantly, the senine represents far greater economic value in real terms than the quadrans (or the lepton). Alma 11:3 indicates that a senine was a judge's standard wage for a day's work. Since a judge would have occupied a position of some status, presumably a senine represented a greater value than the daily wage paid to less honoured workers. Likewise, Alma's complaint in Alma 30:33 means that he never earned a decent day's pay for his work. By contrast, a quadrans was equivalent to 1/64th of a denarius. Since the denarius was a standard rate of pay for one day of ordinary manual labour (*ABD* 1:1087), this means that a quadrans was the value of less than ten minutes of a common labourer's work (cf. Keener 1999, 185, and Osborne 2010, 192, who gave seven and a half minutes assuming an eight-hour day).

The reason for the difference in economic value of the "senine" over against the quadrans or lepton (or "farthing") is that the Book of Mormon gives an entirely different reason for mentioning a monetary unit. In the SM, Jesus is referring to the smallest portion of what the debtor owes the lender and warning that the debtor will not be freed from debtor's prison until the very last little bit of his debt is paid. In the ST, as is clear from Alma 11:2-3, Jesus is represented as saying that the debtor will not be released unless he pays the judge's fees—what people in modern society would call the court costs. In the ST, the debtor is not in debtor's prison, but is incarcerated as punishment for failing to pay his debt. Unfortunately, the debtor is in a double-bind: he is unable to pay the judge's fees because he is incarcerated and unable to earn money. Hence the text of the ST adds a line that does not

correspond to anything in the SM: "And while ye are in prison can ye pay even one senine? Verily, verily, I say unto you, Nay" (3 Ne. 12:26b).

The differences in the ST at 3 Nephi 12:25-26 as compared to Matthew 5:25-26, then, serve to recast the sayings in a way that actually changes the scenario that they originally presupposed. Welch recognized that 3 Nephi 11:25 needs to be read in the light of Alma 11:2-3, and so he correctly explained that 3 Nephi 11:25 mentions the senine because it was "the amount the losing party in a lawsuit was liable to pay the judges" (Welch 1999, 130). However, Welch made no mention of the fact that this is a drastic departure from the original scenario of Jesus' sayings.

Brant Gardner thought that Joseph Smith was trying to recast the sayings to fit the ancient Nephite culture but only succeeded in part. "Joseph was attempting to disengage the principle from its Old World context, but the transition is incomplete because the King James Version obscured the cultural basis" (Gardner 2007, 5:423), that is, the context of debtor's prison. Gardner pointed out, quite correctly, that "Mesoamerican societies, like the Maya and the Aztecs, resolved indebtedness through slavery, not debtor's prison" (5:424). Joseph mistakenly assumed that the debtor would be unable to pay his debt while in prison, not understanding that "the extended family, whose members were not in prison, was responsible for the debt." He concluded that Joseph was trying "to reshape Matthew to fit the Book of Mormon context" but was hampered by his nineteenth-century cultural perspective (5:424).

Gardner's exposition seems largely but perhaps not entirely correct. Although it is difficult to know exactly what was in Joseph's mind, it is likely that Joseph was not trying to revise the passage to fit the Nephite cultural context but rather trying to clarify Jesus' sayings. 3 Nephi 12:25-26 appears to misunderstand the prison of Matthew's version as simple incarceration. Jesus was speaking of debtor's prison, and his statement about paying the last quadrans reflected the cultural reality that the extended family of the debtor sometimes did pay the debt and secure the man's release. Joseph apparently did not understand this cultural assumption of the passage, as Gardner astutely observed, so he "clarifies" the passage by having Jesus assert the impossibility of the debtor paying his debt and going free. In any case, it is evident that the differences between the ST and the SM at this point reflect misunderstanding of Jesus' actual sayings on the part of Joseph Smith.

7.5.10 No Hard Sayings (Matthew 5:19, 29-30)

The ST replaces two units of text in Matthew 5 that contained some of the most controversial and difficult "hard sayings" of Jesus in the SM—or anywhere in the Gospels. The first is Jesus' saying, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19 KJV). This saying is replaced with one that makes reference to "commandments" but is otherwise entirely new: "And behold I have given unto you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall believe in me, and that ye shall repent of your sins, and come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Behold, ye have the commandments before you, and the law is fulfilled; therefore come unto me and be ye saved" (3 Ne. 12:19-20a). The second unit of text contains two hard sayings, the famous injunctions to pluck out one's right eye or cut off one's right hand if it causes one to stumble, lest one's whole body be cast into hell (Matt. 5:29-30). These sayings are replaced by a generalized warning to avoid "these things" (in context referring to lust and adultery) in order to avoid hell: "Behold, I give unto you a commandment, that ye suffer none of these things to enter into your heart: For it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell" (3 Ne. 12:29-30).

The simplest and arguably the most obvious reason for these sayings in the SM to be dropped and replaced with something else is that the person composing the speech found the SM sayings objectionable. Welch himself expressed this perspective on the sayings, describing them as prescribing "unseemly penalties." The punishment of Matthew 5:19 "seems grossly disproportionate to the crime and too uncharacteristically legalistic for Jesus to have said." Likewise, "the suggestion of bodily mutilation" seems out of keeping with Jewish respect for the body and an unlikely thing for Jesus to have said (Welch 1999, 136). But if Jesus had not made these statements in the SM, it would be more likely for the sayings simply to be missing from the ST, rather than to be replaced with sayings that appear to have been composed to smooth over the difficulties. Thus, even if one speculates that these sayings in the SM did not derive from Jesus, the way they are handled in the ST attests to the fact that the author of the ST was familiar with the SM as it appears

in Matthew. Gardner in effect acknowledged as much when he commented with regard to the sayings about the eye and the hand, "The New Testament version obviously is metaphoric, not literal, but Joseph eliminates the imagery and translates the passage's meaning" (Gardner 2007, 5:426).

7.5.11 Take Up Your Cross (3 Nephi 12:30)

In replacing the hard saying in Matthew 5:30, the author of 3 Nephi 12:30 uses the expression "take up your cross," an anachronistic reference to the practice of crucifixion that was all too familiar to Jesus' disciples in Palestine under Roman occupation but that would have been unknown in Mesoamerica (or anywhere else in the Americas). Some Mormons, understandably, have tried to argue that the cross was known in ancient Mesoamerica. Joseph Allen claimed that "the cross was a symbol to both Christ and Quetzalcoatl," the Mesoamerican serpent deity (Allen 1989, 159, cited in Gardner 2007, 5:390). However, as Gardner rightly pointed out, various "cross" symbols in ancient New World imagery had nothing to do with crucifixion, but were associated with the cross of Christ by the Spanish. "Thus they combined and reduced the crosses of ancient Mexico, which differed greatly from each other, to their own cruciform pattern and interpreted them as signs of a previous evangelization" (Lafaye 1974, 154, cited in Gardner 2007, 5:390; see also Gardner 2007, 1:209-213).

According to Charlene Black, "pre-Columbian Mesoamericans practices a type of crucifixion, leading one scholar to suggest that the Colonial Mixtec Cross of Topiltepec analogizes Jesus' sacrifice and Mesoamerican human arrow sacrifice (Callaway, 1990, p. 211)" (C. Black 2001, 288). However, what Mesoamericans practiced was not crucifixion but human sacrifice using either a scaffold, in which the victim was tied to two vertical poles or beams, or a tree, with the bound victim then being shot with an arrow. The practice may well have been "eerily reminiscent of death by crucifixion" but it did not use a cross and did not involve impaling the victim (Hughes 2010, 72-73; see also Scheper 2001, 72). Jennifer Hughes argued, contra Callaway, that the crucifix probably reminded native Mexicans more of the practice of bloodletting than of human sacrifice (Hughes 2010, 72-74).

To describe the reference to "taking up your cross" as anachronistic should not be taken to imply that the Nephites could not have known of any sort of

punishment comparable in some way to crucifixion. In the ancient Near East going back a millennium earlier than the specified time of Lehi, criminals' bodies could be suspended or hung from a tree, a practice mentioned in the Old Testament (e.g., Gen. 40:19, 22; 41:13; Deut. 21:22-23; Josh. 8:29; 10:26). However, in most and probably all instances the bodies were suspended *post mortem* as a warning to others after the persons were killed by some other means, such as beheading. Only in later writings from the Hellenistic and especially the Roman period are such incidents described using the language of "cross" and "crucify" (see Chapman 2008, 97-177). Crucifixion per se meant impaling the criminal alive to a man-made structure and leaving him there to die a slow and painful death. As such it was a form of execution originating no earlier than the Persian period but associated primarily with the Romans (see Hengel 1977). The Septuagint nowhere uses the noun *stauros* ("cross"), and the verb *stauroō* ("to crucify") appears in the Septuagint only in the book of Esther in reference to the hanging of Haman (Esther 7:9; Greek additions to Esther, 8:12).

In the Gospels, Jesus' use of the expression "take up your cross" (Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23) reflected the common Roman practice of forcing criminals to carry their cross to the place of execution (see Matt. 27:32; Mark 15:21; cf. Matt. 10:38; Luke 14:27; 23:26; John 19:17). As such, the expression would have been extremely meaningful to first-century Jewish readers under Roman rule and equally meaningless to the Nephites in Mesoamerica. The expression in the Book of Mormon, then, is clearly anachronistic. The same is also obviously true of references elsewhere in the Book of Mormon to pre-Christian prophets speaking of Christ dying on the cross (1 Ne. 11:33; Jacob 1:8; Ether 4:1) or being crucified (1 Ne. 19:10, 13; 2 Ne. 6:9; 10:3, 5; 25:13; Mosiah 3:9; 15:7; see also 2 Ne. 9:18; Alma 39:9). An anachronistic reference to the cross also appears in Joseph Smith's Book of Moses, his supposedly inspired revision of the opening chapters of Genesis, in which Enoch sees "the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men" (Moses 7:55).

Finally, it should be noted that not only is the expression anachronistic in the ST, but the meaning it is used to convey is even more anachronistic: "For it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things [i.e., lust and adultery], wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell" (3 Ne. 12:30). The same understanding of taking up one's cross was presented by Joseph Smith even

more explicitly in his revision of the Bible: "And now for a man to take up his cross, is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments" (Matt. 16:26 JST). However, Jesus' use of the expression "take up your cross" did not mean denying oneself the indulgence of lust or other forms of moral self-control or self-denial. To take up one's cross meant to be prepared to forfeit one's life for the sake of following Christ (Matt. 16:24-25; Mark 8:34-35; Luke 9:23-24). "It meant marching on the way to one's execution" (Keener 2009a, 434), enduring the shame of opposition and even persecution to the point of death if such arose (cf. Heb. 12:2). The use of the expression "take up your cross" in 3 Nephi 12:30 reflects a modern, moralistic application not in keeping with the sense in which Jesus used it in the Gospels. This finding proves beyond reasonable doubt that Joseph Smith, not Jesus Christ, was responsible for its presence in the ST.

7.5.12 No Swearing by Jerusalem (Matthew 5:35)

In Matthew 5:33-37, Jesus taught that instead of swearing by various things and places one should simply say "Yes" or "No" and mean it. One of the oaths that Jesus criticized was swearing an oath by Jerusalem: "neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King" (5:35 KJV). The ST omits this line (3 Ne. 12:35), and both Welch and Gardner plausibly enough suggested it is omitted because the Nephites were not likely to have sworn oaths by a city they left under imminent judgment (Welch 1999, 130; Gardner 2007, 5:430).

Unfortunately, Welch went further and once again speculated that a line omitted from the ST might have come from Matthew rather than Jesus. The reason he gave was that the title "the great King" was a local title used of Herod Agrippa I but only some years after Jesus' ministry (Welch 1999, 130-31). This argument is completely invalid because it assumes that the use of the expression originated from contemporary political usage. Such an assumption is clearly incorrect, because the title "the great King" does not stand alone but is part of an allusion to the OT in which Jerusalem is called "the city of the great King" (Ps. 48:2). Welch admitted that Psalm 48:2 might have been the source of the expression (Welch 1999, 131), but the evidence is compelling enough to say that it *must* have been its source. The line is the third of three lines alluding to two OT texts pertaining to Jerusalem (see Table 49). Jesus' references to heaven as God's throne and the earth as his footstool

alludes to Isaiah 66:1, which in context is pointing out the inadequacy of the man-made temple in Jerusalem: "what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?" (Isa. 66:1). Jesus' reference to Jerusalem as "the city of the great King" clearly alludes to Psalm 48:2, which describes Mount Zion as God's "holy mountain" where his ruling presence is represented by the temple (Ps. 48:1, 9). Thus, the references to heaven as God's throne and the earth as his footstool prepare for the reference to Jerusalem as the specific place on the earth where God's royal presence was represented.

Table 49. Old Testament Allusions in Matthew 5:34-35	
Matthew 5:34-35	**Old Testament Allusions**
Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.	Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool (Isa. 66:1) Mount Zion… the city of the great King (Ps. 48:2)

The close connection between the allusions to Isaiah 66:1 and Psalm 48:2 in the passage, then, strongly supports the allusion to Psalm 48:2 as part of Jesus' statement about oaths. It also raises some doubt about the likelihood that Jesus would have repeated the allusion to Isaiah 66:1 *without* the related allusion to Psalm 48:2, though of course it is possible. The apostle James in his epistle clearly alludes to Jesus' sayings but summarizes the references to swearing by Jerusalem and one's head with the words "or by any other oath" (James 5:12; cf. Meier 2009, 189).

7.5.13 No "Publicans" or "Gentiles" (Matthew 5:46-47)

The ST omits Jesus' sayings in the SM about "publicans" (i.e., tax-collectors, Matt. 5:46, 47 KJV, cf. 3 Ne. 12:46-47) loving their friends and about "Gentiles" seeking after material needs (Matt. 6:32a, cf. 3 Ne. 13:32). Before commenting on these omissions, a textual issue should be noted. The Greek manuscript evidence supports the term *telōnai* ("publicans," "tax-collectors") only in Matthew 5:46; in the parallel saying in verse 47, where the KJV, following the Textus Receptus, also has "publicans," the better reading is *ethnikoi* (a rarer word in the NT for "Gentiles"), as in NA27. Not only do the older manuscripts favour this reading, but it is also strongly

supported by the fact that of the four occurrences of *ethnikoi* in the NT, three are in Matthew, including another in the SM (Matt. 5:47; 6:7; 18:17; cf. 3 John 7).

The omission of the saying about "publicans" is appropriate in the context of the ST, since this saying presupposed the cultural situation of the Jews under Roman occupation in which tax-collectors were collaborators with the Roman governmental authorities. Welch mentioned the omission in the course of his treatment of supposed "anti-Pharisaical elements" in the SM (Welch 1999, 140), presumably because the use of tax-collectors as stock characters representing self-interest was typical of Pharisaic rhetoric (see also Gardner 2007, 5:435). Assuming this interpretation to be correct, it does not follow that the saying was a Matthean creation rather than an authentic saying of Jesus, as Welch suggested. Jesus both in Matthew and in Luke used the same stock character against type in order to drive home his point (Matt. 18:17; 21:31-32; Luke 18:9-14). Moreover, Luke has a parallel version of the saying in the SP: "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them" (Luke 6:32 ESV). Whichever version of the saying was closer to Jesus' original wording, it is reasonably clear that he said it in his Galilean sermon. If Luke's version was closer verbally to Jesus' original saying, in fact, it would be puzzling for Jesus to omit it in the ST, since "sinners" would not be culturally specific. If, on the other hand, Matthew's use of *telōnai* reflected Jesus' actual word choice (as seems likely), then the saying in that form would have been too culturally specific for Jesus' Nephite audience.

The omission of Jesus' references to Gentiles is another matter. As has been explained, there are actually two such statements in the SM omitted in the ST. The first is Jesus' rhetorical question, "And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles [*hoi ethnikoi*] do the same?" (Matt. 5:47 ESV). The second is Jesus' comment regarding concern for material things, "For the Gentiles [*ta ethnē*] seek after all these things" (Matt. 6:32a ESV).

Welch applied the same questionable reasoning to Matthew 6:32a as he did to the supposed anti-Pharisaical statements in the SM, describing the saying as a possible "antigentile" element created by Matthew (Welch 1999, 141). This speculation is disproved by the parallel saying in Luke, which Welch did not mention: "For all these things do the nations of the world seek after" (Luke 12:30 KJV). In

Greek there is no difference in meaning between "the Gentiles" (*ta ethnē*, Matt. 6:32) and "the nations of the world" (*ta ethnē tou kosmou*, Luke 12:30).

The claim that Matthew has invented or even included the saying to express an anti-Gentile polemic is baseless, since if anything Matthew draws attention to things that reflect positively on Gentiles. For example, Matthew includes Gentile women in Jesus' genealogy (Ruth and probably Uriah's wife, Matt. 1:5-6). He contrasts the Christ-honouring Magi with the Christ-hating Herod and his court (Matt. 2:1-12). Matthew reports Jesus' commendation of a Roman centurion's faith and the healing of his boy (Matt. 8:5-13, cf. Luke 7:1-10). He also narrates Jesus' healing of the daughter of a Canaanite woman (Matt. 15:21-28, cf. Mark 7:24-30). Most significantly, Matthew includes sayings of Jesus (Matt. 10:18; 24:14; 28:19) and a quotation from Isaiah (Matt. 12:18-21, quoting Isa. 42:1-4) announcing a mission to evangelize the Gentiles. Matthew's perspective on Jesus' stance toward the Gentiles is complex (see further Smillie 2002), and is not a legitimate basis for questioning the authenticity of Jesus' saying in Matthew 6:32 (or in 5:47).

With regard to the omission of the saying in Matthew 6:32a from the ST, Gardner commented, "There is no clear basis for this deletion, and it is perhaps unfortunate" (Gardner 2007, 5:459). Gardner noted that Jesus was instructing his disciples not to make accumulation of material things their goal in life, as it was for the Gentiles. Contrary to Gardner's comment, however, Joseph Smith did have a clear reason for deleting this saying in the ST. As explained earlier in this study, the Book of Mormon narrative presupposes that all or virtually all of the inhabitants of the land where the Nephites lived were of Israelite descent (§6.4.2.2). Given that context, a saying challenging the Nephites to be more righteous than non-Israelite peoples (the meaning of the term "Gentiles") would not be appropriate. The problem, of course, is that it is certain that the dominant peoples of the Americas in general, and Mesoamerica in particular, were non-Israelites. Thus, the omission of Matthew 6:32a fits the fictional narrative world of the Book of Mormon but not the historical real-world geographical and cultural setting required if the Book of Mormon is to be accepted as authentic ancient literature. This is the same type of problem observed earlier with regard to the alteration of Jesus' "light of the world" sayings (see above, §7.5.4).

As explained above, Matthew 5:47 refers to "Gentiles" (*ethnikoi*) rather than to "publicans" (*telōnai*). Since a reference to Gentiles would be inappropriate in the narrative context of the ST, it appears that Joseph Smith was correct to omit the verse but that he did so for the wrong reason.

7.5.14 Old Things Are Done Away (3 Nephi 12:47)

In replacing Matthew 5:46-47 with new material, Joseph Smith drew on a famous saying not of Jesus but of the apostle Paul. Thus, in the ST Jesus is quoted as saying, "Old things are done away, and all things have become new" (3 Ne. 12:47). This text is verbally very close to Paul's statement, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17 KJV). Brant Gardner admitted: "Verse 47 alludes to 2 Corinthians 5:17" (Gardner 2007, 5:435).

Of course, the statement is not verbally identical to 2 Corinthians 5:17. The one significant difference is the use of the expression "done away" in place of "passed away." The reason for this difference is that Joseph Smith was conflating Paul's statement with another one he made in the same context: "But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is **done away** in Christ" (2 Cor. 3:14 KJV).

Joseph drew on 2 Corinthians 5:17 elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, in a passage set thousands of years before the coming of Christ: "And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and they shall be like unto the old save **the old have passed away, and all things have become new**" (Ether 13:9). This verse also conflates two NT texts, this time because they use the same expression "passed away." The other text is from the Book of Revelation: "And I saw **a new heaven and a new earth**: for the first heaven and the first earth were **passed away**" (Rev. 21:1 KJV). That these Book of Mormon texts anachronistically use material from NT passages is consistent with the considerable evidence documented earlier in this study of the extensive use of the NT in the Book of Mormon (§6.9).

7.5.15 Omissions from the Lord's Prayer

Two small yet significant omissions in the ST are the omissions of two lines of the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come" and "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:10a, 11, cf. 3 Ne. 13:9-11). Welch did not question that Jesus included these

petitions in the Galilean version of the prayer. Instead, like other LDS commentators, he offered explanations for why Christ would omit these lines when teaching the prayer to the Nephites.

With regard to the petition "Thy kingdom come," Welch and other Mormon scholars generally have agreed that Jesus dropped it from the ST because the kingdom had come as the result of his death and resurrection (Welch 1999, 128-29; Ogden and Skinner 2011, 166; cf. Stendahl 1978, 147-48), or at least was being established by Jesus in his visit to the Nephites (McConkie, Millet, and Top 1992, 4:82; Nyman 2003, 196). Mormon scholars have had more difficulty explaining the absence of "Give us this day our daily bread" from the ST. Some commentators have theorized that the petition was given to the Galilean disciples because their "full-time missions" did not allow them to labour to provide for their daily subsistence (McConkie, Millet, and Top 1992, 4:83). As Gardner pointed out, however, the SM is addressed to the multitude generally and not just to the twelve (Gardner 2007, 5:448-49). Welch floated the suggestion that Jesus omitted the petition because he "knew he would spend the entire day with these people and would not take time for lunch" (Welch 1999, 145)! After making other suggestions, Welch concluded that the petition refers to the "eschatological" bread of salvation and was a request for the realization of "the *coming* Kingdom and its feast," and therefore omitted it for the same reason as the other petition (145-46). Nyman considered yet more explanations and admits that they "are conjectures at best" (Nyman 2003, 196).

Gardner questioned that the presence of the kingdom explains either of the omissions from the traditional version of the Lord's Prayer. With regard to the omission of "Thy kingdom come," Gardner admitted the explanation is possible but thinks it is more likely that the omission was a simple error (Gardner 2007, 5:447). As for the petition for bread, Gardner noted the awkwardness of interpreting its words to refer to the eschatological "bread of life" and proposed a simpler explanation: "Joseph may have read as improper the prayer that bread be simply given rather than earned by working for it" (450).

Although Mormons have put forth multiple explanations for the omission of the "daily bread" petition, only Gardner's has any internal support in the ST. Later in the ST, the text departs from the SM by indicating that Jesus' instruction about not worrying about life's material needs (3 Ne. 13:25-7:1a; cf. Matt. 6:25-34) was spoken

to the twelve alone, because they were to depend on God to supply their needs while engaged in their full-time ministry (see below, §7.5.16). The omission of the petition for daily bread from the Lord's Prayer is consistent with this revision and thus supports Gardner's explanation for that omission.

TABLE 50. THREE VERSIONS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER		
Sermon on Prayer (Luke 11:2-4 ESV)	**Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9-13 KJV)**	**Sermon at the Temple (3 Nephi 13:9-13)**

Father,
 	
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
 	
Give us each day
    our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves
    forgive everyone
    who is indebted to us.
And lead us not
    into temptation.
	Our Father
	    which art in heaven,
	hallowed be thy name.
	Thy kingdom come.
	Thy will be done
	    in earth, as *it is* in heaven.
	Give us this day
	    our daily bread.
	And forgive us our debts,
	as we forgive our debtors.
	
	And lead us not
	    into temptation,
	but deliver us from evil.
		Our Father
		    which art in heaven,
		hallowed be thy name.
		
		Thy will be done
		    in earth as it is in heaven.
		
		And forgive us our debts,
		as we forgive our debtors.
		
		And lead us not
		    into temptation,
		but deliver us from evil.

A point of departure for considering the omission of "Thy kingdom come" is to compare the versions of the Lord's Prayer in the ST with the versions in both the SM in Matthew and the parallel passage in Luke. Here it is important to recognize that the KJV followed the medieval Greek manuscript tradition, which conformed the text of Luke's version more closely to that of Matthew. The analysis here follows the critical Greek text represented by NA27 and other modern editions, as reflected for example in the ESV (see Table 50).

As it turns out, Luke's version is also missing two lines found in Matthew—but two *different* lines from those omitted in the ST. For example, the ST follows the SM by including the line "but deliver us from evil," a line missing from the Lukan version of the prayer. The line rounds out the petition with a complementary request. One may debate whether Matthew has augmented the prayer with this line, Luke has abbreviated the prayer by omitting it, or Jesus taught two different versions of the prayer, but in any case the line depends on and complements the preceding line.

Similarly, Luke lacks the petition "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," whereas the ST, again following the SM, includes this line. As with the line "but

deliver us from evil," the petition that God's will be done complements the petition "Thy kingdom come." That is, what it means in practical terms for God's kingdom to come is that God's will be done on the earth just as it is in heaven. Here again, the point does not depend on determining whether Matthew has added the line, Luke has omitted it, or Jesus gave different versions of the prayer, though a reasonably good case can be made for Matthew's redactional hand here and in the words "which art in heaven" because reference to "heaven" is so characteristically Matthean (see especially Pennington 2007 on this point). In any case, the second line is complementary or elucidatory of the first. Earlier LDS commentators on the Book of Mormon recognized this point when they commented, "it may be assumed that when the will of God is being done on Earth as it is in Heaven, then His Kingdom is established among men" (Reynolds and Sjodahl 1955, 7:154). In support of this point, it should be noted that the petition "Thy will be done" uses the passive form (*genēthētō*, imperative aorist passive), an instance of what is commonly called the "divine passive" in biblical language. LDS scholar Matthew Bowen rightly noted the divine passive in this part of the Lord's Prayer (Bowen 2010, 238-39). The implication is that ultimately God will bring about the doing of his will or purpose on earth just as he does in heaven.

The future orientation of the petition "Thy kingdom come" was not incompatible with the kingdom as a present reality during the pre-crucifixion ministry of Jesus. After a history of scholarship on the kingdom of God careening between purely future and purely present interpretations, contemporary NT scholarship is dominated by the "inaugurated" view of the kingdom as having both a present and a future aspect or dimension—the "already/not yet" view exemplified by Werner Kümmel, Reginald H. Fuller, Joachim Jeremias, George Eldon Ladd, G. R. Beasley-Murray, John P. Meier, and many others (Bock 2001a, 31-32). This duality of present and future aspects of the kingdom is evident in the SM. Jesus assures the poor in spirit and those persecuted for the sake of righteousness that the kingdom of heaven "is" theirs (Matt. 5:3, 10), yet they await the time when they "shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20; 7:21). The ST in the Book of Mormon reflects the same wording in all of these texts except Matthew 5:20, which was changed for other reasons (see above, §7.5.6, 10), and Matthew 6:10. One should probably see the already/not yet, present yet future duality of the kingdom in both of the petitions

in Matthew 6:10. To pray "Thy kingdom come" means to pray for the realization of God's rule both now through those people who humbly seek it and in the future when it will be consummated. Likewise, to pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" means to pray for God's will to be done both now through those people whose hearts are turned toward God's will and in the future when all creation will fully reflect God's will. Here again, the two petitions are evidently complementary.

If the petition "Thy will be done" is complementary to the petition "Thy kingdom come," then the claim that "Thy kingdom come" was inappropriate because the kingdom had come will not work. Yet this does seem the most likely reason for the omission. Gardner's suggestion that the omission was simply a dictation mistake is not plausible, given the fact that most people in Joseph Smith's society had the prayer in its Matthean, KJV form memorized and that Joseph made two revisions to the Book of Mormon without restoring the petition. Thus, it would seem that Joseph Smith made a theological mistake in omitting the petition.

7.5.16 The Twelve Need Not Think about Needs (3 Nephi 13:25)

Although the wording of the discourse unit on material needs in the ST generally follows the SM closely (Matt. 6:25-34, cf. 3 Ne. 13:25b-34), the text departs from the SM by bracketing this discourse unit about not worrying about life's material needs with new material indicating that Jesus spoke these words to the twelve alone. These additions interrupt the discourse with narrative comments stating that Jesus looked to the twelve and spoke to them (3 Ne. 13:25) and that after this part of the discourse Jesus resumed speaking to the multitude (14:1). These are the only narrative interruptions in the ST (there are none in the SM) and they make it explicit that 3 Nephi 12:25-34, the equivalent of the whole "lilies of the field" discourse unit (Matt. 6:25-34), applied only to the apostles. The point is reinforced by new sayings attributed to Jesus at the beginning of the passage: "Remember the words which I have spoken. For behold, ye are they whom I have chosen to minister unto this people" (3 Ne. 13:25b). Jesus' instruction not to worry about food and clothing is thus interpreted in the ST as a special directive to the apostles to withdraw from normal economic activity so as to devote their efforts full-time to ministry. As Gardner said, "This shift in audience solves the problem of apparently counselling the audience not to work for a living" (Gardner 2007, 5:457).

The reason for the change evidently lies in the wording used in the KJV to translate the key verb in the pericope: "*Take no thought* for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink…. Which of you by *taking thought* can add one cubit unto his stature? And why *take ye thought* for raiment? …Therefore *take no thought*, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? …*Take therefore no thought* for the morrow: for the morrow shall *take thought* for the things of itself" (Matt. 6:25, 27, 28, 31, 34, italics for emphasis added). The key verb here, appearing six times in the pericope in Matthew, is the Greek verb *merimnaō*, which the KJV usually translated as "take thought" or "be careful" (perhaps most memorably in Phil. 4:6). To *take thought* in the older English idiom of the KJV meant "to be solicitous or anxious," as Webster's 1828 *Dictionary* reported (N. Webster 1828, 2:92), though by that time this was not a common usage. Hence, Joseph might well have misunderstood "taking no thought" in the passage to mean that Jesus' hearers were supposed to refrain from giving any attention to meeting their bodily needs. On the basis of that misreading, it appears, he sought to clarify the passage by stipulating that Jesus was speaking only to men committed to full-time ministry who would therefore need to rely on God to supply their bodily needs through the gifts of other believers.

The correct understanding of the passage, as has already been suggested, is that Jesus' hearers were not to be *anxious* or *worried* about material needs. BDAG gives as the primary sense of *merimnaō* "to be apprehensive, have anxiety, be anxious, be (unduly) concerned." A key to understanding Jesus' point correctly is in his rhetorical question, "And which of you by being anxious [*merimnōn*] can add a single hour to his span of life?" (Matt. 6:27 ESV). The question obviously is not asking whether anyone can lengthen his life by *thinking*, but instead whether anyone can lengthen his life by *worrying*. Such a rhetorical question is not aimed narrowly at the twelve apostles, but is rather a question posed for anyone who is worrying about where they will get their bodily needs met.

Gardner apparently recognized the problem: "The command to 'take no thought' means that one should not be anxious about such things…. The instruction is not to stop working but rather to not be concerned with their quantity (and especially not with their rich quality) because of the greater importance attached to

heavenly treasures" (Gardner 2007, 5:456). Gardner stopped short of stating that Joseph Smith had misunderstood the SM here, but that is the clear implication.

7.5.17 Conclusion

The foregoing survey of differences between the SM and the ST has yielded considerable evidence of varying kinds confirming the modern origin of the ST. The changes in the ST include:

- *rhetorical inconsistencies* (the new beatitudes in 3 Ne. 12:1-2)
- *new sayings that laboriously reword the sayings from the SM that they replace* (3 Ne. 12:23-24)
- *revisions apparently meant to clarify but that altered the original meaning due to cultural confusion* (3 Ne. 12:25-26)
- *replacing "hard sayings" with new sayings instead of simply dropping them* (3 Ne. 5:19, 29-30)
- *anachronisms* (pietistic use of "filled with the Holy Ghost," 3 Ne. 12:6; use of Johannine style in double-amen sayings; "take up your cross," 3 Ne. 12:30; 2 Cor. 5:17 in 3 Ne. 12:47)
- *omitting references to "the world" and to "Gentiles," probably on the assumption that the Americas were inhabited only by Israelites* (3 Ne. 12:14-16; 13:32; cf. 12:47)
- *misunderstandings of the SM* (misunderstanding "thy kingdom come" to be irrelevant after Jesus' resurrection; misreading the "lilies of the field" pericope, 3 Ne. 13:25-34, to prohibit working for a living, cf. the omission of Matt. 6:11)

Only one explanation satisfactorily accounts for all of this evidence: the ST is a modern revision of the SM. This hypothesis easily and fully accounts for all the evidence. There is nothing in the ST that is better explained as reflecting the situation of the Nephites to whom Jesus was supposedly speaking. In other words, there is absolutely no evidence that in the ST Jesus had *contextualized* his speech to connect effectively with distinctive cultural features and linguistic conventions of the Nephites. Instead, where the ST departs from the SM, it repeatedly reflects in various ways a modern, anachronistic, and at times muddled reading of the SM.

7.6 Old and New World Contexts and the Sermon at the Temple

As was briefly mentioned earlier (§7.5.6), the ST omits the overt reference to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 5:20 while retaining the critique of Pharisaic religiosity that is a major substantive theme in the SM. More broadly, the SM reflects the religious, cultural, social, and political contexts of the Jews in the Middle East toward the end of the Second Temple period (ca. 530 BC—AD 70), as one would expect, and the ST retains most of the elements reflecting those contexts, as one would *not* expect. Not only the scribes and Pharisees but also the Essenes, the Zealots, and the Romans are unnamed participants in the narrative world within which the sayings of the SM repeated in the ST have their intended meaning.

This part of the study surveys the text common to the SM and the ST in order to determine the plausibility of the material in the respective contexts of the Jews in the Old World and the Nephites in the New World. Because most of the differences between the SM and the ST come in the first chapter (Matthew 5 = 3 Nephi 12), and because Matthew 5:17-48 is the most debated part of the SM, disproportionately more attention is given to the first chapter. The remainder of the two versions of the sermon (Matthew 6-7 = 3 Nephi 13-14) are also surveyed but in less detailed fashion. It will be shown that the sayings and discourse units that make up the SM reflected the ancient context of Jesus' hearers and Matthew's readers in the first-century Jewish subculture within the Greco-Roman world. It will further be shown that the material from the SM repeated in the ST, even with the changes that are introduced there, would not have been appropriate in the Book of Mormon's supposed context of first-century Nephites living in the Americas.

7.6.1 *Pirkei Avot* and the Sermon on the Mount

One ancient text is so remarkable for its numerous points of contact with the SM that it merits special attention before looking at specific sections of the SM. This text is known as *Pirkei Avot*, literally "Chapters of the Fathers" (the Hebrew name is also spelled *Pirqei Avot*, *Pirqe Abot*, or *Pirke Aboth*). In standard editions of the Mishnah, in which it first appeared as a text, it is known simply as *Avot* (*Avoth*, *Abot*, *Aboth*) and is the ninth of ten sections in the Fourth Division (*Nezikin*, "Damages") of the Mishnah. Despite this inauspicious placement, *Avot* "is doubtless the most popular and best known of the whole Mishna" (Finkelstein 1938, 13).

Table 51. Comparing *Pirkei Avot* with the Sermon on the Mount	
Pirkei Avot	**Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)**
Be humble (4.4, 10; 5.19)	The poor in spirit, the meek (5:3, 5)
Importance of "righteousness" (2.2, 7)	Importance of "righteousness" (5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33)
The Jews are the "children" of God (3.14)	The pure in heart, who love their enemies, are the "sons of God" (5:8, 45)
Disciples are to be "pursuing peace" (1.12)	"Blessed are the peacemakers" (5:9)
Making "a fence for the Torah" (1.1)	Authoritative teaching to preserve the true intent of the Law (5:17-48)
Keeping the Torah (4.9; "Torah" 42 times)	"the Law…to fulfil it" (5:17; cf. 5:18; 7:12)
Frequent use of threes, even making explicit references to "three" things (1.1, 2, 18; 2.1, 10; 3.1; 4.13; 5.19)	Frequent use of threes, though never explicitly using the word "three" (see above, §5.4.5)
Those who interpret the Torah contrary to the rabbinical traditions will not have a share in the age to come (3.11; cf. 5.8)	Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven (5.19-20)
Gehenna is the place of final judgment on the wicked (1.5; 5.19, 20)	*Gehenna* is the place of final judgment on the wicked (5:22, 29, 30)
Don't talk much with women, especially other men's wives! (1.5)	Whoever even looks at a woman with lust has committed adultery in his heart (5:27-28)
Condemning false swearing (4.7; 5.9)	Don't swear oaths (5:33-37)
The wicked man borrows but does not return; the righteous gives (2.9)	Give to the one who wants to borrow from you (5:42)
God will give the righteous a "reward" in the age to come (2.2, 16; 3.2; 4.10)	The Father will "reward" those of true righteousness (6:1)
One should choose to do what is honourable "in the view of others" (2.1)	Don't give alms, pray, or fast to be seen by others (6:2, 5, 16)
Four kinds of almsgivers (5.13)	Two kinds of almsgivers: ostentatious and private (6:2-4)
When you pray, don't just go through the routine (2.13)	When you pray, don't babble (6:7)
Don't profane the Name (1.11; 4.4; 5.9)	Praying for God's name to be hallowed (6:9)
Importance of doing what God wishes (2.4)	Praying for God's "will" to be done (6:10)
Warnings about envy [literally, an "evil eye"] (2.9, 11; 5.19)	Warnings about allowing one's eye to be evil (6:22-23)
Caution in judging others (1.6; 2.4; 4.8)	Caution in judging others (7:1-5)
Disciples are to be concerned for others' honour and money as they are for their own (2.10, 12)	Disciples are to do for others as they would want others to do for them (7:12)
"Carry out the will of your Father who is in Heaven" (5.20)	"Doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (7:21 KJV)
One who has greater wisdom than works is like a tree with many branches but few roots that is blown away by the wind; one who has greater works than wisdom is like a tree with few branches but many roots that is not blown away by the wind (3.17)	The one who does what Jesus says is like the wise man who builds his house on the rock: when the wind blows it stands. The one who does not do what Jesus says is like the fool who builds his house on the sand, so that when the wind blows it falls (7:24-27)

Avot "is unlike the other mishnaic tractates in that it contains no legal material, but is largely composed of the wise sayings of the principal rabbis," making it effectively "the foundational document of the Mishnah" (Wills 2001, 250). This significance is reflected in an alternate translation of *Avot* as "fundamental principles" and in the fact that the tractate has often been incorporated into "many editions of the traditional prayer book" in Judaism (Walfish 2011). The relevant material is specifically *Avot* 1-5, since the sixth chapter is commonly recognized as a much later addition to the tractate.

There are many points of contact between *Avot* and the SM, some arguably so commonplace as to prove little, but some quite distinctive. Cumulatively, the parallels (sometimes expressing similar viewpoints, sometimes contrasting viewpoints) constitute strong evidence that the two works reflect the same specific cultural and religious context. A list of nearly two dozen parallels between the SM and *Avot* 1-5 is given in Table 51 (citations and quotations from *Avot* are taken from Neusner 1988, 672-89; see also Danby 1933, 446-58). The number of parallels is remarkable considering that the two works are relatively short (in English, the SM is about 2,400 words and *Avot* is about 6,700 words). It is also noteworthy that there are several parallels from each chapter of *Avot* and from each chapter of the SM.

Since the Mishnah was not compiled as a written text until ca. AD 200-220, there is no possibility of Matthew, written roughly AD 50-80, being in any way dependent on the Mishnah. On the other hand, it is highly unlikely that Matthew, a Christian text, had any positive influence on the Mishnah. However, the Mishnah drew on oral traditions of rabbinical sayings going back much earlier, and *Avot* specifically quotes sayings of Jewish teachers from the first century AD as well as from the preceding two centuries. Even though modern scholars rightly caution that these quotations must be subjected to historical criticism, it is reasonably clear that much of the sayings did originate before or around the same time as the NT era.

The point here is not to argue "for mutual influence or dependence" of Jesus or Matthew on *Avot* or vice versa, but rather to show that the two texts reflect "a similar historical environment" (Ottenheijm 2009, 45, 46). The SM and *Avot* reflect much the same language, rhetoric, and religious and cultural traditions and issues. They shared a common culture, a common inherited worldview, and a common constellation of controversial questions arising from their shared contexts. More

specifically, the pervasive parallels and contrasts demonstrate that the compilation of sayings of Jesus in the SM critically engages the religious values and piety of first-century Jews *especially as represented by the Pharisees*—the Second Temple antecedents of the rabbinical tradition codified in the Mishnah and exemplified in *Avot*, which "expresses the quintessence of Pharisaism" (Davies 1967, 127).

A number of studies have examined various points of contact between *Avot* and the SM (e.g., Lemcio 1988; Wills 2001; Ottenheijm 2009). The most often discussed parallel, not listed in Table 51, pertains to the first saying in *Avot* attributed to a specific teacher: "Simeon the Just was of the remnants of the Great Synagogue. He used to say: By three things is the world sustained: by the Law, by the [Temple-] service, and by deeds of loving-kindness" (*Avot* 1.2). William D. Davies (1963, 304-315) seems to have been the first scholar to propose that the three main sections of the SM treat "three things" corresponding at least roughly to the three things mentioned by Simeon and in the same order. In the SM these three things, according to Davies, are the Law (Matt. 5:17-48), ritual acts (Matt. 6:1-18), and a less well-defined category of pious deeds (Matt. 6:19-7:12). Davies and those who have supported his view here interpret Simeon's third item, *gemîlût hăsādîm*, as denoting pious acts in general (Davies 1963, 305; Allison 1987, 443). "Matthew 5-7 addresses three fundamental issues, the law, the cult, and social behavior; that is, it addresses the three things upon which, according to Simeon the Just, the world stands, and it addresses them in precisely the same order" (Allison 1987, 443).

The schema discerned by Davies and Allison seems suggestive even though it may need some refinement. It is clear enough, as Davies and Allison both explained, that Simeon's triad required some adaptation following the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70. The evidence of the Gospels (including but not limited to Matthew) shows that Jesus was already in his teaching, a generation before the temple's destruction, laying a foundation for piety apart from the temple. Thus, the sayings in the middle section of the SM deal with alms, prayer, and fasting, all of which could be practised at the temple or away from it, but not with sacrifice or other temple-specific works of piety. The third major section of the SM may seem less coherent or unified in its contents, but all of the sayings in that section call on Jesus' disciples to act kindly toward others out of trust in God as Father and loyalty to his kingdom above all else. Thus, the disciples are to store up

treasures in heaven rather than on earth, trusting in God, not mammon, as their master (Matt. 6:19-24). They are to seek God's kingdom over any anxieties they may have, trusting God regarding their material needs (6:25-34). They are to act as agents of God's kingdom by helping rather than condemning others (7:1-6). They are to trust in God as their Father to give what is good to them when they ask, thus freeing them to do good toward others (7:7-11).

The three main sections of the SM, then, do roughly correspond to Simeon's three sustaining values: the Law, pious acts of religious ritual, and faithful acts of goodness toward others. The correlation is made all the more plausible by the numerous other points of contact between the SM and *Avot*. Not only in its individual sayings but in the broad scope of the whole discourse, the SM reflects pointed engagement with the first-century Jewish religious culture as represented especially by the scribes and Pharisees. This fact poses a serious problem for the idea that Jesus would present essentially the same discourse to people living in the other hemisphere and who had been isolated from the Jews for six hundred years.

7.6.2 The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12; 3 Nephi 12:3-12)

In general, beatitudes would certainly have been familiar to the Nephites. In the Septuagint, there are several examples of individual beatitudes that begin with the words "Blessed are the," *makarioi hoi*, just as do the beatitudes that the SM and the ST have in common (1 Kings 10:8; 2 Chron. 9:7; Ps. 83:5; 105:3; 118:1-2; Isa. 30:18; 32:20 [all Psalms references from the LXX]). However, the practice of stringing several beatitudes together appears to have developed later in Jewish history. Psalm 118:1-2 LXX (119:1-2 Eng.) is the only instance in the OT of even two "beatitudes" presented consecutively. It was during the Second Temple period that the beatitude form developed into what one finds in the SM. An early and significant example appears in the book of Tobit, probably written in the late third or early second century BC (translating literally from the Greek):

> Cursed are all those who hate you,
> and blessed shall be all those who love you forever.
> Rejoice and be glad [*charēthi kai agalliasai*]
>   for the sons of the righteous [*huiois tōn dikaiōn*];
> for [*hoti*] they shall be gathered together,
>   and shall bless the Lord of the righteous [*tōn dikaiōn*].
> O blessed are those who [*makarioi hoi*] love you to rejoice in your peace.
> Blessed are those who [*makarioi hosoi*] have been distressed by all your afflictions;

> for [*hoti*] they shall be made joyful over you when they see all your glory,
> and shall be glad forever. (Tobit 13:12-14 [13:14-16 Greek])

The beatitudes in Tobit 13 are not identical in form to those in the SM, but they are much closer than anything in the OT. Moreover, they show some striking verbal and thematic connections to the Matthean beatitudes, especially the ninth beatitude promising blessing to those who suffer persecution.

As pointed out earlier in this study (§5.4.4.1), comparative studies with Jewish literature have shown that the beatitude-text form arose during the Second Temple period (see Daube 2000; Fitzmyer 2000, 114-16; Allison 2005, 175-77; Brooke 2005, 221-24). The best-known example is 4Q525 (also called 4QBeatitudes) in the Dead Sea Scrolls; it exhibits the very distinctive structural pattern of several short, simple beatitudes capped off with one longer and more complex beatitude (quoting from Martínez and Tigchelaar 2000, 1053-54):

> [...] with a pure heart,
>   and does not slander with his tongue [---]
> Blessed are those who adhere to his laws,
>   and do not adhere to perverted paths. [---]
> Blessed are those who rejoice in her,
>   and do not burst out in insane paths. [---]
> Blessed are those who search for her with pure hands
>   and do not pursue her with a treacherous heart. [---]
> Blessed is the man who attains Wisdom, [---]
>   and walks in the law of the Most High,
>   and directs his heart to her ways, [---]
>   and is constrained by her discipline
>   and always takes pleasure in her punishments;
>   and does not forsake her in the hardship of wrongs,
>   and in the time of anguish does not abandon her,
>   and does not loathe her. [---]
> For he always thinks of her,
>   and in his distress he meditates on her
>   and in all his life he thinks of her,
>   and places her in front of his eyes in order not to walk on paths [...]

As one can see, in this text there were at least four short beatitudes following basically the same form (Puech 1993, 354-55, argues there were probably eight, the same number as in Matthew), followed by a much longer concluding beatitude. These beatitudes in 4Q525 "represent the closest analogy" to those in the SM (Lichtenberger 2005, 41). Thus, Jesus' series of beatitudes used a speech form familiar and specific to his first-century Jewish hearers in Galilee.

While one might suppose that Jesus could use the rhetorical form of a series of beatitudes in addressing the Nephites, one would have expected Jesus to adapt

his speech to the rhetorical conventions of the Nephite culture. Moreover, there is an even more important reason to question the presence of the Beatitudes in the ST: They culminate in sayings warning Jesus' hearers to expect persecution for following him (Matt. 5:10-12; 3 Ne. 12:10-12). This warning was directly applicable to Jesus' Galilean and Judean followers, many of whom went on to suffer persecution—imprisonment, beatings, even execution—as a result of their faithful testimonies to Jesus (e.g., Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-42; 6:8-15; 7:54-8:3; 9:1-2, 23-25; 12:1-5; etc.). According to the Book of Mormon, on the other hand, none of Jesus' Nephite followers ever suffered any real harm. The three Nephite apostles "were cast into prison" but "the prisons could not hold them," "cast into a furnace and received no harm," and "cast into a den of wild beasts…and received no harm" (3 Ne. 28:19-22).

The faux experiences of persecution of the Nephite disciples did not last long, since the Book of Mormon narrates a mass conversion of all of the people in the land to faith in Christ within two years after his appearances to them, followed by almost two centuries of peace and prosperity throughout the land. "And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another" (4 Ne. 1:2). Persecution did not arise until the 201st year (1:29). Thus, Jesus' promise of blessings to those persecuted for his sake would have had no relevance whatsoever to anyone hearing him deliver the ST. Yet as in the SM, Jesus' warnings of persecution are not presented as warnings to some future generation but as part of what his hearers could expect if they were to accept his message of the kingdom.

7.6.3 The Salt of the Earth (Matthew 5:13; 3 Nephi 12:13)

The Book of Mormon retains Jesus' saying about the salt of the earth largely unchanged: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor wherewith shall the earth be salted? The salt shall be thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men" (3 Ne. 12:13, cf. Matt. 5:13). In Matthew, the "salt of the earth" is a metaphor comparable to "the light of the world" (5:14), both ways of picturing the disciples as a minority that nevertheless will bring valuable change to the rest of the world if they are faithful. Gardner quoted with approval the commentator Alan Hugh M'Neile's

explanation that "earth" in this saying refers to the "world of men" (Gardner 2007, 5:410). The retention of the salt saying in the ST is problematic, then, because the light saying is revised to refer to "this people" instead of "the world" (§7.5.4). In the SM, the two sayings both convey the mission of the church to bring saving truth to the rest of humanity (the "earth" and the "world" are here comparable in scope). In the ST, that mission is excised from the "light" saying but not from the "salt" saying.

Another problem in connection with the "salt of the earth" saying has to do with its reference to salt. The Nephites, if they had existed, would surely have known about and used salt, especially if they lived in ancient Mesoamerica as most LDS scholars maintain. Because their diet was not rich in meat, "tropical farmers like the Maya require about 8 grams of salt a day to maintain their sodium balance," so that salt was one of the most important resources of the Mayan region, with a major source of salt "along the lagoons of Yucatan's north coast" (Coe 2011, 22). Yet salt is not mentioned in the Book of Mormon except in its repetition of this saying from the SM and in one subsequent comment alluding back to the same saying (3 Ne. 16:15). By contrast, there are nineteen references to salt in the OT, not counting the nine references to "the salt sea" (i.e., what is known today as the Dead Sea). The NT epistles also contain two references to salt (Col. 4:6 is especially relevant; see also James 3:12). Thus, the problem in this instance is not with the ST itself but in the lack of any contextual indications elsewhere in the Book of Mormon that the salt metaphor would have been meaningful to the Nephites.

7.6.4 The Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17; 7:12)

The ST includes the two references in the SM to the Law and the Prophets that stand at the beginning and the end of the body of the discourse ("the law or the prophets," 3 Ne. 12:17, cf. Matt. 5:17; "for this is the law and the prophets," 3 Ne. 14:12, cf. Matt. 7:12). In Jesus' day "the Law and the Prophets" was "a set phrase referring to the Holy Scripture of the Jews as a whole" (Betz 1995, 177), found in writings of four NT authors (Matt. 5:17; 7:12; 22:40; Luke 16:16; 24:44; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:23; John 1:45; Rom. 3:21b). It is found in Jewish writings of the second century BC (Sirach Prologue 1, 9-10, 24; 2 Macc. 15:9) as well as from other Jewish writings from roughly the same period as the NT (e.g., 4 Macc. 18:10).

There are three texts in the OT that refer to "the law" and to "the prophets" in the same context. Only one of these comes in a preexilic context, and in this instance the text does not come close to using these words as a term for Scripture: "Keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets" (2 Kings 17:13). The other two references are in postexilic writings, and these also have nothing like the formal expression "the Law and the Prophets" (Neh. 9:26; Zech. 7:12). Thus, it appears that as the body of Jewish scriptures coalesced and stabilized in the years following the time of Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century BC, those scriptures eventually came to be known as "the Law and the Prophets."

Since the earliest extant examples of this expression "the Law and the Prophets" date from the second century BC, it seems unlikely that Jesus or the Book of Mormon writer would have used it in the Nephite cultural context. It appears nowhere else in the Book of Mormon other than a reference attributed to Jesus shortly after the ST explaining what he had said in the ST (3 Ne. 15:10). There is a variant of the expression in a speech attributed to Nephi in the sixth century BC: "The right way is to believe in Christ and deny him not; for by denying him ye also deny the prophets and the law" (2 Ne. 25:28). It is not clear in context if this statement is even meant to refer to the scriptures as a whole that would have existed at the time. Given the definite anachronism of the passage's explicit use of the name "Jesus Christ" (2 Ne. 25:19-20, cf. 25:23-29), it is best to view the expression "the prophets and the law," if a reference to the Scriptures as a whole, as likewise anachronistic.

One other point may be made here. It is reasonably clear that Jesus did use the expression "the law and the prophets" when speaking in Galilee, since Matthew and Luke both report Jesus using this expression or some close variant of it (Matt. 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; 24:44). On the other hand, there is some evidence to think that this expression has been added by Matthew to some of Jesus' sayings, notably the Golden Rule saying (Matt. 7:12). Willem Nicol, a conservative South African NT scholar, years ago commented that he would "be very reluctant to contend this" but "the evidence seems convincing" that the words "for this is the Law and the Prophets" are a Matthean redaction (Nicol 1977, 83). The fact that Matthew has them in his version of the Golden Rule while Luke does not (Luke 6:31) and the placement of similar words at Matthew 5:17 (no Synoptic parallel) and at 22:40

(where the parallel passages in Mark and Luke again do not have them) strongly support this conclusion. This redactional analysis is further supported by the fact that the Golden Rule is the one statement in the SM paralleled in Luke's ST that is placed in a different location. The case for viewing the expression as a Matthean gloss is weakest in 5:17 and strongest in 7:12; perhaps Jesus used the expression in the former saying and Matthew has added it at 7:12 to make the sayings form an *inclusio*. In doing so he would have simply been making explicit what was implicit in Jesus' teaching. Nevertheless, if the expression is Matthean in either or both places in the SM, its appearance at the same places in the ST is further evidence of the dependence of the ST on Matthew.

7.6.5 Not to Abrogate the Law but to Fulfil It (Matthew 5:17; 3 Nephi 12:17)

In both the SM and the ST, Jesus is quoted as assuring his hearers that he had not come to abolish the Law but to fulfil it: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17 KJV; 3 Ne. 12:17). In the context of the SM, there was a very important reason for this statement: what Jesus was about to say might have been misunderstood as negating or abrogating (the meaning of *katalusai*, translated "destroy" in the KJV) the Torah. Jesus' statement here thus emphasizes that he "did not seek to annul, repeal, do away with, or make invalid the Mosaic legal code" (Lioy 2007, 23-24). In the Hellenistic culture that had threatened the distinctive culture and even the identity of the Jewish people ever since the second century BC, Jews were extremely sensitive to any challenge to the authority of the Torah (Evans 2012b, 114). The Gospels report various incidents in which the Pharisees accused Jesus of violating the Law and inciting others to do so as well (e.g., Matt. 12:2, 10, and parallels in Mark and Luke; John 5:10; 7:23). Matthew, who alone reports this saying (though cf. Matt. 5:18 with Luke 16:17), was likely especially concerned to rebut the charge for his readers, since he was part of a Jewish-Christian community that most likely was criticized on this very point. One of the earliest accusations made against the earliest Jewish Christians was that they believed that Jesus was going to "change the customs that Moses delivered to us" (Acts 6:14, cf. 6:11; 21:21).

The situation of the Nephites as presented in the Book of Mormon is rather different. Throughout the Book of Mormon, the Nephite prophets are quoted as teaching their people that the Law of Moses was temporary and limited, preparatory for the coming of Christ. These Nephite prophets often speak about the Law in terms that are obviously influenced by the NT. So the sixth-century Jacob, Nephi's brother, comments that "by the law no flesh is justified" and therefore that "redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth" (2 Ne. 2:5, 6, cf. Rom. 3:19-20, 24; John 1:14). "Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law" (2 Ne. 2:6, cf. Rom. 10:4; Heb. 9:23). Later Jacob is quoted as saying that "for this end hath the law of Moses been given," namely, to prove the coming of Christ, because everything God has given to men has been "are the typifying of him" (2 Ne. 11:4). Nephi gives an especially explicit discourse on the temporary nature of the Mosaic law:

> And, notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled. For, for this end was the law given; wherefore the law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments…. Wherefore, we speak concerning the law that our children may know the deadness of the law; and they, by knowing the deadness of the law, may look forward unto that life which is in Christ, and know for what end the law was given. And after the law is fulfilled in Christ, that they need not harden their hearts against him when the law ought to be done away… And, inasmuch as it shall be expedient, ye must keep the performances and ordinances of God until the law shall be fulfilled which was given unto Moses (2 Ne. 25:24-25, 27, 30; see also 26:1).

Similar statements frequently appear elsewhere in the Book of Mormon narrative made by speakers living before Christ's appearance (e.g., Mosiah 3:14-15; 13:27-32; Alma 25:15-16; 30:3; 34:11-16). The book of 3 Nephi even reports that the Nephites in the early first century AD understood that the law had to be kept until it was fulfilled, stating the matter in terms very much like Matthew 5:17-18. "It was made known unto them that the law was not yet fulfilled, and that it must be fulfilled in every whit; yea, the word came unto them that it must be fulfilled; yea, that one jot or tittle should not pass away till it should all be fulfilled" (3 Ne. 1:25).

Brant Gardner recognized this difference in the Nephite context, but he did not consider the possibility that it shows the saying in 3 Nephi 12:17 to be out of place. Instead, he commented, "The meaning of these phrases would have been entirely different in the New World…. In the New World, they would be attuned to denials about the fulfillment, not reassurances about the law" (Gardner 2007, 5:415). The problem is that it does not make sense for Jesus to use the same sentence in the same place in the discourse to express an "entirely different" meaning. Gardner was also vague as to what that meaning would have been in the Nephite context, saying only, "These words were an answer about how it [the Law] would change." That does not seem to be a plausible explanation of the statement in any context: the saying offers no description about how the Law was going to change.

In addition, the Book of Mormon assumes that all or at least nearly all of the people living in the lands occupied by the Nephites were of Israelite ancestry and heritage (§6.4.2.2). There is in the Book of Mormon narrative world no foreign power threatening to overwhelm the Nephites culturally. Since the Book of Mormon world has no cultural context in which Jesus would need to assure the Nephites that he was not challenging the authority of the Law, and since the Nephites had repeatedly been taught that Christ would come and fulfil the Law, thereby bringing it to an end, the repetition of Matthew 5:17 in 3 Nephi 12:17 is out of place.

7.6.6 Jot and Tittle (Matthew 5:18; 3 Nephi 12:18)

The ST retains Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:18, though reworded to reflect the context of Jesus speaking after his death and resurrection: "For verily I say unto you, one jot nor one tittle hath not passed away from the law, but in me it hath all been fulfilled" (3 Ne. 12:18). The attempt to retain the saying in Matthew while recasting it to reflect a post-resurrection perspective has resulted in an awkwardly (and ungrammatically) worded sentence. Presumably what the second clause is meant to say is something like "not one jot or tittle hath passed away from the law."

The reworded sentence is somewhat confusing as well as awkward. It presents Jesus as saying that nothing has "passed away from the law" but that it has "all been fulfilled." Yet in Matthew 5:18 the saying implied that the Law *would* pass away once it had been fulfilled: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18 KJV). The Book of

Mormon seems to assume this understanding later, when it quotes Jesus explaining part of the ST:

> …there were some among them who marveled, and wondered what he would concerning the law of Moses; for they understood not the saying that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new. And he said unto them: Marvel not that I said unto you that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new. Behold, I say unto you that the law is fulfilled that was given unto Moses. Behold, I am he that gave the law, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel; therefore, the law in me is fulfilled, for I have come to fulfil the law; therefore it hath an end (3 Ne. 15:2-5).

Beyond this confusion, 3 Nephi 12:18 continues to use language that reflected specific shared cultural elements with Jesus' Galilean hearers (and Matthew's Jewish-Christian readers) but not with his supposed Nephite hearers. The words "jot" and "tittle" in the KJV translate the Greek *iōta* and *keraia*, terms Matthew used to transliterate the names of the smallest Hebrew letter *yodh* (י) and the *serif* or projection found in Hebrew letters that helped to distinguish them from one another (Evans 2012b, 117; cf. Gardner 2007, 5:416). Jesus' language here alludes to stories told by Jewish teachers and later recorded in Jewish midrash texts and the Talmud regarding the sacred preservation of *yodh.* In the best known of these stories, the rabbis "said that when Sarai's name was changed to Sarah, the *yodh* removed from her name cried out from one generation to another, protesting its removal from Scripture, and finally, when Moses changed Oshea's name to Joshua, the *yodh* was returned to Scripture" (Keener 2009a, 178).

Such stories concerning the letter *yodh*, and the proverbial use of *yodh* for the smallest part of the Torah, of course presupposed that *yodh* was the smallest letter in Hebrew. That was indeed the case at the time of Jesus, by which time the "square" Hebrew script had developed. In the palaeo-Hebrew script that the Jews had used during the First Temple period, the letter *yodh* "was no smaller than any of the other letters" (Lachs 1978, 106). The Jews gradually began adopting the square script from Aramaic after the Babylonian Exile (Sáenz-Badillos 1993, 16, 76).

Jesus' terminology not only reflected the Second Temple period, well after the time Lehi and his party would have left the Old World, but presupposed a tradition of scribes zealously concerned to preserve the correct Hebrew wording of the Torah through centuries of copying and re-copying the text on perishable materials. Nothing like this would apply in the Nephite culture: according to the Book of

Mormon, their sacred writings were written in a modified form of Egyptian, not Hebrew; they were written on bronze and gold plates, with no history of transmission producing multiple copies; and the Book of Mormon therefore makes no mention whatsoever of scribes. Jesus' reference to the "jot" and "tittle" of the Law, then, is culturally anachronistic in the ST.

7.6.7 Jesus and the Torah (Matthew 5:21-48; 3 Nephi 12:21-48)

As discussed earlier (§7.5.7), the ST rewords the clauses that introduce the six so-called "antitheses" in the first major section of the SM. Whereas in Matthew each of the six discourse units is introduced with "you have heard that it was said" or some slightly variant equivalent, in 3 Nephi each unit is introduced with a clause asserting instead that "it is written" or the equivalent (see Table 47). The point was briefly argued that the difference most likely reflected Joseph Smith's own view that Jesus' statements in Matthew 5:21-48 were to be understood as intensifying or elevating the demands of the written Law. It was also suggested that this interpretation of the passage reflected in the ST may be a misunderstanding: Jesus' sayings very likely were challenging Pharisaic interpretations of the Torah. This assessment will be defended in some detail here.

At the same time, the point must be made at the outset and will bear repeating that even if Jesus was presenting a higher or more rigorous standard of righteousness than the Torah, he articulated his teaching *with very specific attention to matters of concern and even debate among Jews in Galilee and Judea*. On this point there is as much of a consensus in NT scholarship as there is on any subject. Once this very specific cultural and historical context of the antitheses is clearly understood, it will be quite evident that it is extremely implausible that Jesus would have addressed the same topics in largely the same way when addressing the Nephites. Thus, the critique of the historical authenticity of the ST in this regard does not depend on a controversial interpretation of the passage that is accepted by some NT scholars but rejected by others.

7.6.7.1 Murder and Anger (Matthew 5:21-26; 3 Nephi 12:21-26)

The first of the antitheses gives two statements, only one of which is found in the OT: "thou shalt not kill' and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the

judgment" (Matt. 5:21 KJV; 3 Ne. 12:21 adds, "of God"). The words "thou shalt not kill" are, of course, the sixth commandment (Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17). The second statement is not a direct quotation from any known source. Craig Evans suggested that the statement "summarizes the juridical process" found in several texts in the Mosaic law, such as Exodus 20:12, Leviticus 24:17, Numbers 5:32, and Deut. 17:8-13 (Evans 2012b, 121-22; similarly France 2007, 200; Turner 2008, 169). The main verbal connection between these Mosaic statutes and Matthew 5:21b is the use of the term "the judgment" (*hē krisis*) for the judicial decision in murder cases (Deut. 17:9, 11; cf. Num. 35:12). According to Davies and Allison, since the statement "is a fair summary of the legislation" in those texts, it is "not to be labelled rabbinic interpretation" (Davies and Allison 1988, 511). Another explanation is that Jesus was referring to a Jewish exegetical tradition of interpreting the sixth commandment by linking it to Genesis 9:6. In the *Targum Onqelos* the phrase "by man" in Genesis 9:6 was interpreted to mean "following the testimony of witnesses according to the decision (sentence) of judges" (Ruzer 2005, 91; so also B. Young 2007, 46).

These two explanations need not be incompatible with one another. Evidently Jesus was commenting not simply on a statement in the Torah but on a particular way of reading the sixth commandment as a legal statute applied by the human judicial system in Israel. Jesus' comments on the statements he quotes in no way challenge the prohibition against murder or (contra Betz 1995, 218-19) the judicial system for punishing murderers. Rather than interpreting it as referring only to overt physical acts of murder subject to criminal review and punishment, Jesus expounds on the sixth commandment as a revelation of true righteousness (note Matt. 5:20). "One has not conformed to the better righteousness of the kingdom simply by refraining from homicide" (Carson 2010, 181). In effect, he was telling his listeners that they should not think that they were righteous as judged by the sixth commandment as long as they had not committed a literal act of murder. Rather, the sixth commandment presupposed a standard of righteousness that went to the heart and in which the judgment would be rendered in the heavenly court.

Thus, Jesus challenges the merely legal interpretation of the sixth commandment by warning that anger against one's brother is enough to merit condemnation:

> "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother
>   will be liable to the judgment;

> and whoever says to his brother, '*Raca*!'
> > will be liable to the council;
> and whoever says, 'Fool!'
> > will be liable to the *Gehenna* of fire" (Matt. 5:22, lit. trans.).

In this saying the judgment, the council, and the fiery Gehenna are all eschatological, divinely administered expressions of justice, in contrast to the human criminal justice system in Israel to which the second part of Matthew 5:21 referred (see Keener 2009a, 183-84, and the Jewish literature cited there). This means, by the way, that Joseph Smith's revision of Matthew 5:21 makes as interpretive mistake. In both the ST and the JST, Joseph added "of God" at the end of verse 21, construing "shall be in danger of the judgment" as referring to God's judgment (3 Ne. 12:21b; Matt. 5:23 JST).

Matthew quoted Jesus' saying here using two words that were not Greek. The word *geenna* is a Hellenized form of the Hebrew *gê'-hinnōm*, "valley of Hinnom," a valley located just south of Jerusalem and that was almost uniformly known in the OT as "the valley of the son of Hinnom" (Josh. 15:8; 18:16; etc.). (Only once in the OT, Neh. 11:30, is the shorter form "valley of Hinnom" used without an immediately preceding reference using the longer form.) *Gaienna*, an early Hellenized transliteration of *gê'-hinnōm*, appeared once in the Septuagint (Josh. 18:16). Since the time of Ahaz, more than a century before the Nephites' progenitors would have left the Jerusalem area, Ben-Hinnom Valley had been the site of horrific sacrifices of Israelite children on altars to the Baals, and specifically to Molech (2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6; Jer. 7:31-32; 19:1-6; 32:35). While the Nephites might therefore have been familiar with this notorious practice associated with "the valley of the son of Hinnom," they would not have any awareness of the use of the shortened name *gê'-hinnōm* as a stock term for the eschatological place of punishment for the wicked. "The term 'Gehenna' appears abruptly in the apocalyptic literature of Judaism of the second century B.C." (Scharen 1992, 328 n. 16).

Like the KJV, the Book of Mormon uses the English expression "hell fire" in place of *tēn geennan tou puros*, literally "the Gehenna of the fire" (Matt. 5:22; 3 Ne. 12:22). Since the ST is clearly dependent on the KJV, as has been demonstrated already, it is reasonable to assume it is dependent on it here as well. It is admittedly possible to speculate that the text on the gold plates had a different expression, one that used a word other than Gehenna, but that the expression conveyed the same

meaning. However, there is reason to question the plausibility of this explanation. The Book of Mormon uses the word *hell* 59 times, always with reference to the eschatological place of judgment on the wicked, and 51 of these occurrences appear in the narrative prior to the ST beginning in 1 Nephi. Yet of those 51 occurrences, not one associates hell with fire. Only once in the Book of Mormon following the ST is hell associated with fire, and it is in the same expression "hell fire" (Mormon 8:17). By contrast, the word *geenna* occurs just twelve times in the NT, and yet of these four make the association with fire explicit (Matt. 5:22; 18:9; Mark 9:43; James 3:6). This evidence confirms that the expression "hell fire" in 3 Nephi 12:22 derived from the KJV and not as a functional equivalent for a Reformed Egyptian expression revealed to Joseph Smith.

The other non-Greek word appearing in Matthew 5:22 is *rhaka*, a Greek transliteration of an Aramaic word *rêqa'* meaning something like "empty-head" or "numbskull" (as Mormon scholars have acknowledged, e.g., Welch 1999, 173; Gardner 2007, 5:420; Huntsman 2010, 99; cf. BDAG and the commentaries). Here the KJV does not attempt an English translation but simply transliterates the word as *Raca*, and the Book of Mormon does likewise in the ST. The fact that in this one verse, the ST agrees with the KJV in its translation of a Hebrew expression *and* in its transliteration of an Aramaic word, provides irrefutable evidence of its dependence on the KJV. Moreover, it is of course unlikely in the extreme that first-century Nephites would have been familiar with an Aramaic term of insult. While Jews in early sixth-century Jerusalem may have had some limited exposure to Aramaic, it is implausible that their descendants six centuries later would happen to be using the same Aramaic term for insulting someone's intelligence as Jesus' Galilean audience, for whom Aramaic was their first language.

Following Jesus' stern warning that the anger that is the root of murder is also liable to the judgment of hell, he developed his point about anger and murder: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23-24). As shown earlier in this chapter (§7.5.8), Jesus' saying here alludes to the Genesis account of Cain getting angry with his brother Abel after offering his gift to God (on an altar) and then murdering his brother (Gen. 4:1-11). This means that Jesus was

showing the inadequacy of the Pharisees' interpretation of the sixth commandment, which treated it simply as a legal statute within the law code of the Torah. What they needed to do was to interpret it in light of the foundational narrative in the early chapters of Genesis, where the root cause of murder is exposed. The ST obscures the allusion by removing the references to the altar and gift. However, as was also shown earlier, the wording of 3 Nephi 12:23-24 is patently a modification of the SM text dependent on the KJV, and thus one should assume the original wording of the saying as attested in Matthew in interpreting the passage.

In conclusion, the argument Jesus presented in this discourse unit (Matt. 5:21-26) was neither overturning the Mosaic law nor even "intensifying" or "heightening" it, but was laying bare what the Law was really teaching in its own context. His argument was directed not at the Law but at an inadequate way in which Pharisees of his day were interpreting it. Yet the Book of Mormon represents Jesus as presenting essentially the same argument in his speech to the Nephites. Further compounding the problem, the ST quotes Jesus using distinctive language that the Nephites would not have recognized ("hell fire," i.e., *Gehenna*, and *Raca*), doing so in a way that further demonstrates the Book of Mormon's direct dependence on the KJV.

7.6.7.2 Adultery and Lust (Matthew 5:27-28; 3 Nephi 12:27-28)

In the second of the "antitheses," Jesus begins with a simple quotation from the Torah: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'" (Matt. 5:27; similarly 3 Ne. 12:27). In this instance what "was said" is undeniably a direct quotation from Scripture, matching the wording of the seventh commandment in the LXX precisely (*ou moicheuseis*, Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:17). The question is what Jesus is saying in regards to this commandment.

Jesus' next words are, "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman [*gunaika*] with lustful intent [*pros to epithumēsai*] has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:28; also 3 Ne. 12:28, which omits "with her"). In Welch's view, this saying articulated a "new law," which he called "the law of chastity," that in addition to prohibiting adultery intensifies the rules of the Mosaic law because the new law "also requires purity of heart" (Welch 1999, 68). However, the verb *epithumēsai* used in Matthew 5:28 ("to lust," KJV; "lustful intent," ESV) is also

found in the tenth commandment, where it is commonly translated "covet": "You shall not covet [*epithumēseis*] your neighbor's wife [*gunaika*]" (Exod. 20:17; Deut. 5:21). The ambiguity of the Greek noun *gunaika* (*gunē*, "woman," "wife") and the convention in English of using "covet" if the object is a thing and "lust" if the object is a person obscure the connection to the tenth commandment for English readers. Despite correctly noting that Matthew 5:28 uses the same verb as the tenth commandment, LDS scholar Huntsman described Jesus' statement there as his "counterproposition" to the seventh commandment (Huntsman 2010, 100). The description is appropriate if qualified to make clear that Jesus was countering *an interpretation of* the seventh commandment that failed to take it in the context of the tenth commandment (similarly Keener 2009a, 187). Jesus was not changing or modifying the Torah at all, but was simply pointing out that the Torah itself demanded purity of heart and not just of external action (Brower 2004, 301-302). Such purity of heart, then, was not a requirement that intensified or went beyond the Torah.

Jesus' juxtaposition of two texts to show that one properly qualifies the other, in this instance the seventh commandment qualified by the tenth commandment, is an exegetical technique found in rabbinical and other Jewish sources. Serge Ruzer discussed the use of this technique specifically in Jewish interpretive discussions of the commandment prohibiting adultery (Ruzer 2005, 103-105). He documented that some interpreters connected the seventh commandment to the tenth, as Jesus did, while others connected the seventh commandment to Leviticus 20:10 and argued, in effect, that the former was limited to overt acts of adultery and was merely the prohibition for which the latter was the penalty. It appears, then, that Jesus was siding with those who understood the seventh commandment in the more "intensified" way, based on correlating it with the tenth commandment (105).

From another perspective, Jesus' saying here presented a challenge to the conventional male Jewish perspective on adultery. To put it bluntly, that conventional perspective was that women were to blame for adultery, so that what men needed to do was simply avoid women as much as possible. Thus the rabbis "intensified the seventh commandment but did so by ever more careful restrictions of contact with women" (Brower 2004, 301). One can see this approach in *Pirkei Avot*, which as shown earlier displays numerous points of contact with the SM (see Table 51

earlier). In *Avot* 1.5 men were counselled to avoid talking to women, especially to other men's wives. This was a typical example of building "a fence around the Law" (*Avot* 1.1): if a man avoided even talking to another man's wife, then he would be far less likely to commit adultery with her. Although well-intentioned, this approach to righteousness is purely external and leaves the man unchanged. Jesus challenged "the effectiveness of the 'fence' around the law" and announced the righteousness of the new covenant, "where Torah is written on the heart" (Brower 2004, 301, 303).

Of course, men of all cultures need to understand that the righteousness God wants from them is of the heart, not just external conformity. In this regard, one might well argue that there would be nothing strange about Jesus making such a point when speaking to the Nephites. Yet in this discourse unit Jesus makes that point in a way that uses conventional forms of Jewish exegesis and engages a specific interpretive issue of controversy in ancient Jewish society. His point can be understood by people of other cultures, but the way he articulated the point was aimed squarely at his own Jewish culture in Galilee and Judea. The Nephites apparently did not have a tradition of "building a fence around the Law," yet Jesus' saying here targeted that tradition in a very particular way. Thus, it does not seem very likely that Jesus would have addressed this issue in the same way when speaking to the geographically and culturally distant Nephites.

7.6.7.3 Divorce (Matthew 5:31-32; 3 Nephi 12:31-32)

In both the SM and the ST, the statement Jesus discusses in the third "antithesis" reads, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement" (Matt. 5:31; 3 Ne. 12:31). Although this statement definitely alludes to Deuteronomy 24:1, it is not a quotation from that text (or any other). To understand what Jesus was doing here, it is necessary to look more closely at the passage in Deuteronomy.

The words that form the basis of Jesus' allusion are part of an elaborate legal statute that addressed a specific situation, that of a woman who had been divorced but then found herself divorced or widowed from her second husband. The statute mandated that in such a circumstance the woman was forbidden to be remarried to her first husband (Deut. 24:1-4). According to nearly all modern interpreters, the point of the statute was not to mandate a certificate of divorce (though it might be

construed as presupposing that such a document would be produced whenever a divorce took place). Rather, the giving of the divorce paper was part of the scenario that this particular case law addressed. Thus, the statute begins, "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce…" (Deut. 24:1). As John Meier pointed out, this part of the statute is "a subordinate clause" (Meier 2009, 37; cf. 78 for his translation of Deut. 24:1-4). The following literal translation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4a shows the clausal structure of the statute (an asterisk marks verbs that are waw consecutive perfect forms, the standard Hebrew verbal form in narration):

> 1 If [*kî*] a man takes [qal imperfect] a woman and marries* her,
> and it comes to pass* that she finds no favour [qal imperfect] in his eyes
> if [*kî*] he has found [qal perfect] in her some indecency [*'erwat dābār*],
> and he writes* [*wekātab*] her a certificate of divorce [*sēper kerîtūt*],
> and he puts* it in her hand and sends* her out of his house,
> and she leaves* his house,
> 2 and she goes* and she becomes* another man's (wife),
> 3 and the latter man hates* her
> and writes* her a certificate of divorce
> and puts* it in her hand and sends* her out of his house—
> or if [*'ô kî*] the latter man dies [qal imperfect],
>   who took [qal perfect] her to be his wife—
> 4 her former husband is not able [*lô'-yûkal*, qal imperfect]
>   (who sent [piel perfect] her away)
>   to take [2 qal infinitive construct verbs] her back
>   to be [qal infinitive construct] his wife,
>   after she has been defiled [hothpaal perfect],
> for that (is) an abomination before Yahweh.

Virtually all scholars agree that in the Hebrew text the clauses in Deuteronomy 24:1 are subordinate and that the main clause comes in verse 4 (Warren 1998 is one of the very few exceptions). The clause "and he writes her a certificate of divorce" uses the waw consecutive perfect form of the verb found throughout verses 1-3, in which the statute narrates the case that is the basis of the case law. Removed from this narrative structural context, it might be possible to construe the verb *wekātab* as expressing permission or obligation ("may/must write," Warren 1998, 43), but in the context such a rendering appears highly dubious.

The Septuagint translation likewise understands the clauses in Deuteronomy 24:1-3 as narrative exposition of the case addressed in the statute. Yet the statement that Jesus presents in the third antithesis does not, but treats verse 1 as

giving a separate command mandating the certificate of divorce. The difference may be seen clearly by putting Jesus' statement alongside the part of the clause from the Greek translation of Deuteronomy to which it alludes:

"Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce" (Matt. 5:31). *Hos an apolusē tēn **gunaika** autou **dotō autē apostasion***	"When a man takes a wife… and he writes her a certificate of divorce and gives…" (Deut. 24:1 LXX [lit. trans.]). *Ean de tis labē **gunaika**… kai graphei **autē** biblion **apostasiou** kai **dōsei**…*

The statement that Jesus poses has four key words in common with the opening clause of Deuteronomy 24:1, but not only is it at most an allusion, it restructures the statement grammatically so that it becomes a directive to give the women a certificate of divorce. The key verbs in the Greek translation of the OT statute are future indicatives (*graphei* and *dōsei*), whereas the corresponding verb in Matthew 5:31 is an aorist imperative (*dotō*). Thus, in this context the introductory words "it hath been written" in 3 Nephi 12:31 are a mistake, since Jesus was not quoting Deuteronomy 24:1.

The interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1 as a commandment distinct from the prohibition against a twice-married woman remarrying her first husband was current in the Jewish culture of Jesus and Matthew. Josephus also understood verse 1 as a separate commandment requiring a husband to give his wife such a certificate if he divorced her, viewing the prohibition of the woman returning to him after marrying someone else as a second commandment (*Ant.* 4.9.23 §253; Meier 2009, 37). Meier attributed this view to the author of the Gospel of Matthew, assuming that he was endorsing the view. In context, it is more likely that the author understood Jesus to be citing the conventional Jewish view as a set-up for his own authoritative pronouncement. That is, the opening statement in this antithesis is not treated as a quotation from the Torah (which it demonstrably was not) or even as a fair summary of the statute (contra Betz 1995, 244), but as a particular scribal interpretation of the text that was current in the first century, as Josephus attests.

The exegesis of Deuteronomy 24:1 as a separate commandment was part of a broader history of debate among Jewish interpreters as to the significance of that text for the question of legitimate grounds for divorce. The school of Shammai

interpreted Deuteronomy 24:1 to mean that a man was not permitted to divorce his wife unless she was guilty of "unchastity," an interpretation emphasizing the term "indecency" (*'erwat*, meaning nakedness, shame, or indecency) in the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy 24:1. On the other hand, the school of Hillel interpreted the same text to mean that a man might divorce his wife even on the grounds that "she spoiled a dish for him," an interpretation emphasizing the open-endedness of the word "thing" (*dābār*) in that text (in the expression *'erwat dābār,* "indecent thing" or "something indecent"). Rabbi Akiva (Akiba), who taught in the generation that followed Matthew's, went even further than Hillel, arguing that the phrase "if she finds no favour in his eyes" indicated that a man might divorce his wife simply because he found a prettier woman (*m. Gittin* 9:10, in Neusner 1988, 487).

Hillel and Shammai were roughly contemporaries, teaching about BC 30 to AD 10 (though Hillel was reportedly much older). If the respective positions of the two schools went back to the two teachers themselves, or even to the generation that followed them, then these positions would have been debated among the Pharisees during the public ministry of Jesus in the late 20s and early 30s AD. It is also possible that the views attributed to the two schools in the Mishnah had become more developed or sharply defined over time. Notwithstanding the reservations of a very few scholars such as Meier (2009, 95), almost all scholars agree (as Meier concedes) that the Hillel–Shammai argument concerning Deuteronomy 24:1 attested in the Mishnah is relevant context for the NT era (e.g., Davies and Allison 1988, 1:530-32; Betz 1995, 246-48; Klouda 2004, 25; Ruzer 2005, 107-108; Blomberg 2007b, 23-24; Osborne 2010, 200; Quarles 2011, 125; Evans 2012b, 125; McKnight 2013, 101-102). Even some LDS scholars have agreed (Huntsman 2010, 101; Draper 2010, 112-14). David Instone-Brewer could state that "since about 1850, every academic commentary has acknowledged that behind Jesus' debate with the Pharisees lies this internal debate that is recorded in various collections of rabbinic traditions" (Instone-Brewer 2013, 213). It is almost beyond dispute that at the time of Jesus the statute in Deuteronomy 24 was the subject of a debate among Jewish teachers regarding grounds for divorce.

It is possible that the debate was sparked, or if not sparked certainly fuelled, by recent developments of immediate political import. The Herodian family had made divorce and remarriage the ancient Israelite equivalent of front-page or Twitter

news. "Josephus mentions nine divorces among the Herodians. In four cases the husband divorced his wife, and in five the wife divorced her husband…. Herodias divorced one uncle, Herod Philip, in order to marry a second, Herod Antipas" (Hanson and Oakman 2008, 41, 42, citing *Ant.* 18.109-36). Herodias's divorce and subsequent marriage to Herod Antipas had elicited the public condemnation of John the Baptist, whom Antipas had arrested in Galilee perhaps only a few weeks or months before Jesus' Galilean sermon and who was later executed at her instigation (Matt. 14:3-11; Mark 6:17-28; Luke 3:19-20; 9:7-9). Jesus' second and third antitheses may both allude to the scandal: Herod Antipas had lusted after his brother Philip's wife Herodias, divorced his wife without proper grounds, and then married Herodias, who had divorced Philip without proper grounds. The connection to Herod Antipas is most immediate in Luke 16:16-18, where the saying about divorce comes close after a reference to John the Baptist (Instone-Brewer 2002, 160). But the connection is implicit in the narrative context of Matthew as well, since the Herods and John are the dominant public figures in the three chapters immediately preceding the SM (Matt. 2:3-7, 12-23; 3:1-17; 4:12). If the Jews had not already been debating the grounds for divorce, the Herodias affair would surely have provoked such debate.

Both Matthew and Mark report that John had told Herod Antipas that what he had done was not "lawful" (*exestin*, Matt. 14:4; Mark 6:18), and that sometime after John's execution the Pharisees, to "test" Jesus, had asked him if it was "lawful" (*exestin*) for a man to divorce his wife (Matt. 19:3; Mark 10:2). The Pharisees' intention to "test" Jesus in this case almost certainly involved something beyond evaluating his prowess in the interpretation of the Torah. In the politically charged context of the Herodian family's domination of Galilee at the patronage of the Romans, the Pharisees no doubt thought they were posing a dangerous dilemma for Jesus. If he answered that divorce was not lawful, they could use this answer against him by informing the Herodians, who might view Jesus as a threat just as John had been. If he answered that divorce was not lawful, they could argue that he was contradicting John, despite their well-known association. The trap was similar in its intent to the trap set by the Pharisees and Herodians not much later with their question to Jesus whether it was "lawful" (*exestin*, Matt. 22:17; Mark 12:14; Luke

20:22) to pay taxes to Caesar. These passages account for three of the four occurrences of *exestin* in Mark and three of the nine occurrences in Matthew.

The evidence adduced above strongly supports the conclusion that Jesus' saying about divorce in Matthew 5:31-32 was made in the context of a contemporary Jewish controversy over the grounds for divorce given political significance by the events involving the Herods and John the Baptist. In that context Jesus addressed a very specific interpretive issue focused on two words found in the legal statute in Deuteronomy 24:1. Of course, this context was literally foreign to the supposed historical, cultural context of the Nephites, who knew nothing about the Herods.

Jesus' response to the use of Deuteronomy 24:1 to legitimize divorce neither challenged nor changed the statute. In one sense, Jesus took a more restrictive view of divorce, similar to the position of the school of Shammai. The only ground of divorce Jesus recognized, according to Matthew, was *porneia* (Matt. 5:32; 19:9), best understood as a general term denoting sexual immorality (see its use in Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21). The other explanations—that *porneia* refers here to adultery (Goulder 1974, 18), sexual infidelity during the betrothal (Isaksson), or both (e.g., Janzen 2000), or most notably marriages that were invalidated because they were incestuous or consanguineous (e.g., Bonsirven 1948, 46-60; Witherington 1985; Fitzmyer 1998)—are not so much wrong as they are unjustifiably narrow. The term could refer to any of those situations or to a variety of other sinful, generally sexual, violations of the marital covenant (so most exegetes, e.g., Blomberg 1990; Wilkins 2004, 246-47; Osborne 2010, 200; Quarles 2011, 130-31; McKnight 2013, 102). The general term *porneia* suitably covered "a wider range of improper sexual relations," as LDS scholar Huntsman correctly concluded (Huntsman 2010, 101). That is, it included potentially a variety of situations in which the marriage was already untenable or invalidated, whether due to one of the specific circumstances mentioned above or to some other equally serious breach of the marital union.

Matthew's specific expression in Matthew 5:32 is *logou porneias*, a fairly literal translation of *'erwat dābār* in Deuteronomy 24:1, the Hebrew expression that was the focal point of the debate between the Hillelites and the Shammaites (Instone-Brewer 2002, 158-59). The Greek *logos*, like the Hebrew *dābār*, is usually translated "word" but depending on context could be translated "matter," "reason," "thing," and the like. Where Jesus' view differed from that of the school of Shammai

was that he regarded Deuteronomy 24:1 as at most permission to divorce as a concession to the hard-heartedness of men. He made that point explicitly in his conversation on the subject with Pharisees (Matt. 19:7-8; Mark 10:4-5), but it is implicit in Matthew 5:31-32 as well. In that context, the previous two antitheses had already critiqued a merely external righteousness that masked an angry or lustful heart (Matt. 5:21-30). Thus, Jesus was not challenging the statute in Deuteronomy 24 but asserting that the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven does not seek to justify self-serving justifications for divorce.

Since Mark (10:11-12) and Luke (16:18) both attest to the saying without the exception clause "except for *porneia*," it is plausible and arguably likely that the clause was a Matthean gloss. In adding the exception clause, Matthew would not be altering Jesus' meaning but clarifying that Jesus taught a standard of no divorce except in situations where the marriage was already *de facto* over. If the phrase was a Matthean gloss, then its appearance in the ST (3 Nephi 12:32) is yet another example of the dependence of the ST on the Gospel of Matthew.

Finally, it should be noted that the only other mention of divorce (of any wording) in the Book of Mormon is in the lengthy material in 2 Nephi duplicated from Isaiah (2 Ne. 7:1=Isa. 50:1), in reference to God's "divorcement" from Judah because of the nation's sins. Indeed, the Book of Mormon gives very little attention to marriage at all. The term *marry* appears elsewhere only in 3 Nephi 22:1 (quoting Isa. 54:1) and 4 Nephi 1:11, which is the only text that uses the term *marriage*. Only eight other passages speak of marriages, using the expression "take to wife" (1 Ne. 7:1; 16:7; Mosiah 25:12; Alma 17:24; 47:35; Ether 8:10-11; 9:4, 24). When LDS scholar Richard Draper presented a paper seeking to use LDS scripture "to shed light" on the saying in Matthew 5:31-32 (Draper 2010, 110), he made no reference anywhere in his paper to any passage in the Book of Mormon other than brief, uninformative citations of the parallel text in 3 Nephi 12:31-32 (Draper 2010, 111, 112, 121 n. 2). Thus, 3 Nephi 12:31-32 is the *only* passage relevant to the dissolution of human marriage in the Book of Mormon. Its inclusion in the ST has no explanation beyond the fact that it was in the SM.

To sum up what has been said in this section: In Matthew 5:31-32, Jesus was not challenging or intensifying the Mosaic law, but was challenging the Pharisaic assumption that the statute expressed divine approval of at least some divorces.

Jesus' comment on divorce reflected a very recent event of public concern in the immediate vicinity there in Galilee (Herodias's divorce and marriage to Herod Antipas) and focused on the same two words in the same OT verse that was the subject of intense debate among the two leading Pharisaic schools of the day, those of Shammai and Hillel. The Nephites could not have had any knowledge of that context, and the rest of the Book of Mormon shows absolutely no interest whatsoever in the subject of divorce (and makes barely any references to marriage). This brief discourse unit, then, is out of place in the ST.

7.6.7.4 Oaths (Matthew 5:33-37; 3 Nephi 12:33-37)

In both the SM and the ST, Jesus begins his fourth "antithesis" with the statement, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths" (Matt. 5:33b KJV; 3 Ne. 12:33b). This statement is not a quotation from any specific verse in the OT (or anywhere else). A typical explanation is that the first clause is a summary of several Mosaic laws and perhaps other texts (Exod. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2-15; Deut. 23:21-23; Zech. 8:17) while the second is a paraphrase of Psalm 50:14 (e.g., Garlington 1995, 158-59; Turner 2008, 172; Carson 2010, 187; Evans 2012b, 127).

Jan Lambrecht has attempted to show that the first clause is a quotation of the ninth commandment forbidding false witness (Lambrecht 2011). However, the verb in that clause is *epiorkēseis*, "swear falsely" or "break oath," whereas the Septuagint uses an entirely different verb in the ninth commandment, *pseudomarturēseis*, "bear false witness" (Exod. 20:16; Deut. 5:20). By contrast, in Jesus' other quotations from the Decalogue (Matt. 5:21, 27) the verbs are identical to those used in the Septuagint. It is evident from the context in which Jesus was focusing on oaths sworn by something other than God's name (Matt. 5:34-37) that the relevant commandment is the third, which prohibits taking God's name in vain (Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11), not the ninth.

Deuteronomy 23:21, "If you make a vow [*euchēn*] to the LORD your God, you shall not delay fulfilling [*apodounai*] it," may come closest to expressing the thought of the whole statement in Matthew 5:33b. The first clause is perhaps most similar to Leviticus 19:12 LXX, "you shall not swear [*omeisthe*] by my name in an unjust manner [*ep' adikō*]," while Psalm 50:14 (49:14 LXX), "pay [*apodos*] your vows

[*euchas*] to the Most High," is perhaps similar in thought to the second clause of Matthew 5:33b, "you shall pay [*apodōseis*] to the Lord your oaths [*orkous*]." It is not the case, however, that Psalm 49:14 LXX is "nearly verbatim" the same as the last clause of Matthew 5:33b (Gardner 2007, 5:430). Suffice it to say that the statement Jesus poses at the beginning of this discourse unit echoes many OT texts but quotes none of them. Recognizing that Jesus was not simply quoting any one of these texts, Don Garlington concluded, "These references, as coupled with the survey of the Jewish materials above, argue that Jesus treads a broad stream of tradition regarding swearing—biblical and contemporary" (Garlington 1995, 159).

Of the six "antitheses" in Matthew 5, this one concerning oaths may be the most culturally distinctive. Garlington has commented that the discourse unit can seem like "a fossil embedded in an otherwise recognizable contemporary program of ethics" (Garlington 1995, 139). The reason the passage appears as a curiosity from the perspective of a modern reader is that it addressed a very distinctive religious practice that had developed in the Jewish culture of the Second Temple period.

The making of oaths, of course, is an ancient practice that pre-dated the time of Jesus by thousands of years. However, the practice of using surrogate or substitute names or circumlocutions in place of the divine name was a far more recent development. The practice can be dated confidently from the Dead Sea Scrolls and other sources to the third century BC, but in the form discussed by Jesus certainly well after the Babylonian Exile (see Skehan 1980; Massey 1991, 3-5; McDonough 1999, 58-116; and by a Mormon scholar, Parry 1997).

The earliest stage of this development was probably the use of generic titles of deity, especially "God" (Heb. *El*, *Elohim*) and "Lord" (Heb., *Adonai*), in place of the Tetragrammaton (*YHWH*, *Yahweh*). There is a possible example of this substitution in the Psalter, where Psalm 53 is almost identical to Psalm 14 except that it uses *Elohim* instead of *YHWH*. Reticence to use the name YHWH might explain its absence from Ecclesiastes and Esther (Cohon 1951, 584), although Esther uses no surrogate expressions for deity. In the third century BC, the Septuagint used the title *kurios* ("Lord") as its customary surrogate for the Hebrew YHWH, a practice that presupposed some existing concern to avoid writing (and speaking) the Tetragrammaton (Pietersma 1984; Rösel 2007). By far the most reasonable explanation for the origin of this practice was the rise of the scribes and other

teachers of the Torah that began with the work of Ezra in the fifth century BC. This new class of religious figures appears to have introduced the principle of building a "fence around the Law" (*Avot* 1.1). Jewish teachers applied this principle to the third commandment by teaching that the best way to avoid taking the name of YHWH in vain was to use it as little as possible. As time passed the principle was extended to other divine names such as "God," leading to the use of circumlocutions such as one sees in the NT, for example, "the Power" (Matt. 26:64), "the Blessed One" (Mark 14:64), and "Heaven" (Luke 15:18, 21).

Along with this development of abstract circumlocutions for the divine name, the practice developed of swearing oaths by various places and objects instead of swearing by the divine name. One of the earliest written references to this practice that mentions some of the very items found in Matthew 5:34-36 is in the writings of Philo, who wrote in the first half of the first century AD. "However, if a man must swear and is so inclined, let him add, if he pleases, not indeed the highest name of all, and the most important cause of all things, but the earth, the sun, the stars, the heaven, the universal world; for these things are all most worthy of being named, and are more ancient than our own birth, and, moreover, they never grow old, lasting for ever and ever, in accordance with the will of their Creator" (Philo, *Special Laws* 2.5, in Philo 1855, 3:256). Here Philo, writing before Matthew and probably within two decades or less of Jesus' Galilean sermon, made explicit reference to swearing by the earth and by heaven.

All of the specific examples mentioned by Jesus are also clearly attested in the Mishnah and other rabbinical sources. As mentioned previously, the Mishnah dates in written form later than the NT, but because of the specificity of the parallels with the references in Matthew the ideas expressed clearly dated from at least the first century AD. In some instances, the traditions are presented in the Mishnah in what appears to be a somewhat more developed form than the traditions that Jesus criticized. Moreover, in some cases the Mishnah simply reports that the rabbis debated the proper stance. Not surprisingly, some of these debates involved the schools of Hillel and Shammai (*m. Nedarim* 2.4).

According to the Mishnah, "[If] one owed an oath to this fellow, and his fellow said, '[Instead of an oath], take a wow to me by the life of your head', R. Meir says, 'He has the power to retract.' And sages say, 'He has not got the power to retract"

(*m. Sanhedrin* 3.2, in Nuesner 1988, 587). Here the opinion of one rabbi (of the second century AD) is reported, followed by the information that "the Sages" (Hebrew, *ha-chamim*), the general consensus of rabbinical opinion, overruled that opinion. There was similar debate about the binding force of oaths or vows referring to Jerusalem (*m. Nedarim* 1.3). The section of the Mishnah treating oaths states that if someone is told to swear "by heaven and earth," then such an oath is not binding (*m. Shabuoth* ["Oaths"] 4.13, in Neusner 1988, 629). Thus, the use of such surrogates for the divine name, intended originally to safeguard against blaspheming or misusing the divine name, tended in legal interpretation to become "a convenient way out for strengthening one's speech by swearing without risking taking God's name in vain" (Holmén 2001, 173).

The thrust of Jesus' teaching in this discourse unit is to reject the notion that some oaths are less binding than others. Rather than measuring one's oaths in gradations of binding force, Jesus teaches his disciples not to swear oaths at all but instead be faithful in everything they say. As Charles Quarles astutely observed, the injunction that Jesus poses at the beginning of the unit "does not necessarily prohibit all forms of deceit and leaves a legal loophole by not prohibiting deception when one is not under oath" (Quarles 2011, 136), or, one should add, when one makes an oath by something less than God's name. These "loopholes" that Jewish interpreters found in the Torah are what Jesus challenged, not the Torah itself. LDS scholar Amy Hardison correctly recognized that this was the point of Jesus' saying: "Christ categorically denounced all such loopholes" (Hardison 2010, 29-30).

Despite the view of some commentators that Jesus was absolutely prohibiting all use of oaths (e.g., McKnight 2013, 113-19), it is probably better to understand him to be rejecting the abuse of oaths he went on to critique (e.g., Quarles 2011, 138, 143-44). The absolutist interpretation understands Jesus to mean, "Don't swear at all, [whether by the name of the Lord or] by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or your head," but this does not seem to be Jesus' meaning. Rather, the main clause, "Do not swear at all" (Matt. 5:34a), is qualified by the four complex dependent clauses, "neither…because" (*mētē…hoti*) that follow (5:34b-36). That is, the logic of Jesus' argument runs as follows:

> *You have heard that oaths must be kept when they are sworn to/by the Lord*
> [but not when sworn by something lesser].

> *But I say don't swear at all by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or your own head; instead, let your Yes mean Yes and your No mean No.*

John Welch correctly concluded, "the prohibition is directed at the practice of swearing euphemistically, thinking that such an oath is somehow less potent than if the oath had been sworn in the name of God" (Welch 2009, 103). Recognizing that Jesus was critiquing such a practice, however, raises a serious objection to this discourse unit appearing in the ST. Of course, it would be plausible enough for Jesus to tell the Nephites that they ought to be honest and faithful in all things. What is not plausible is that they had independently developed the same casuistic tradition of assigning greater binding force to oaths sworn by heaven, earth, or other things than oaths sworn by God's name. Brant Gardner admitted, "The specific examples rely upon rabbinic traditions well known in the Old World; probably exact parallels did not exist in the New World" (Gardner 2007, 5:430). The problem runs even deeper: the idea that the Nephites had independently developed any such practice, even using other surrogates for swearing in God's name, is highly unlikely. The practice presupposed the scribal, legal principle of the fence around the Torah, a cultural and religious tradition that emerged following the work of Ezra more than a century after Lehi and his party would have sailed for the Americas.

There is no reference in the Book of Mormon text prior to 3 Nephi 12 of anyone swearing using such circumlocutions. However, there are two references to the practice in the books that follow 3 Nephi. The Book of Mormon (i.e., the short thirteenth book in the Book of Mormon having the same name) reports that following a military victory in the fourth century AD, the Nephites "began to swear before the heavens that they would avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren who had been slain by their enemies. And they did swear by the heavens, and also by the throne of God, that they would go up to battle against their enemies, and would cut them off from the face of the land…. And when they had sworn by all that had been forbidden them by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ…" (Mormon 3:9-10, 14). Here Jesus' teaching about oaths has been disconnected entirely from its cultural context. Jesus was criticizing the use of supposedly less binding oaths because they fell short of the unvarying fidelity that should characterize the kingdom of God. In Mormon 3 these oaths are simply expressions of arrogant, vengeful blood lust. In Jesus' critique, he explained that swearing by heaven did not make an oath less

binding because heaven is God's throne (Matt. 5:34; 3 Ne. 12:34). Here in Mormon 3, the arrogant Nephites swear by heaven *and* by God's throne (Mormon 3:10).

Gardner admitted that the reference to forbidden oaths in Mormon 3 recalls the passage in the ST in which he has already admitted that the specific reference to swearing by heaven reflected the Jewish context in the Old World. He cautiously suggested that "the actual wording of the oath may have had different cultural referents in the New World" (Gardner 2007, 6:73). He attributed the confusion regarding swearing by God's throne to Joseph Smith, who "mistakenly paraphrased the reason as the oath" (Gardner 2007, 6:74). Somehow, Gardner thought that the basic narrative could be accepted as authentically ancient (i.e., there really were Nephites who really swore to exact vengeance on real Lamanites, using an oath that Jesus had forbidden) at the same time as admitting that the specific elements of the oath are a modern paraphrase utilizing the material in the SM in an inaccurate way. It is difficult to make any coherent sense of his proposal. If Joseph Smith was really inspired to know that the gold plates reported Nephites swearing an oath to avenge their dead by attacking the Lamanites, and that the oath they used was one that Jesus had forbidden the Nephites to use three centuries earlier, surely he would also have been inspired to know what that oath actually said. Moreover, Gardner's explanation fails to engage the fact that the practice of swearing by heaven instead of by the name of God was a culturally distinctive development in Second Temple Judaism. Gardner's attempt to have it both ways simply will not work here.

In the very next book, a wicked Jaredite named Akish asks his relatives to swear an oath to do as he asked, and "they all sware unto him, by the God of heaven, and also by the heavens, and also by the earth, and by their heads" (Ether 8:14). Note that Akish's people swear by the heavens, the earth, and their heads, the very same three oaths that Jesus condemned in the SM and that are repeated in the ST. Yet this incident would have taken place more than two thousand years before the time of Jesus, centuries even before the time of Moses. Here again, the practice has been completely disconnected from its true cultural context—Akish's people swear by God *as well as* by the other things—and is set a continent away in a time period easily two millennia before it historically originated. Gardner's commentary on Ether 8 takes no notice whatsoever of the particulars of the oath and so does not address the problem at all (Gardner 2007, 6:250-51).

What has happened here is easy to see. The author of the Book of Mormon, having incorporated an edited version of the SM in his narrative (the ST, in 3 Nephi 12-14), decided to include in the subsequent narrative some examples of wicked people making the kinds of oaths that he thought Jesus was criticizing in the sermon. Yet the author did not understand the point of Jesus' criticism, let alone the historical origins of the practice. The result is that the two books that follow 3 Nephi have stories of wicked people making oaths that only sound superficially like what Jesus criticized and that are clearly anachronistic.

7.6.7.5 "Resist Not Evil" (Matthew 5:38-42; 3 Nephi 12:38-42)

In the fifth "antithesis" in both the SM and the ST, Jesus quotes the Mosaic law: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" (Matt. 5:38; 3 Ne. 12:38). The Greek text of this quotation matches the Greek translation of a line found in three Mosaic statutes, which literally read "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (*ophthalmon anti ophthalmou odonta anti odontos*), with the insignificant addition of "and" (*kai*) between the two parts (Exod. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21). Thus, there is no question that in this instance Jesus quoted a written text of the Torah. What can be questioned is the inference that Jesus was challenging or nullifying the Torah. A brief survey of the three statutes, followed by an examination of the rest of Jesus' argument, will show that he was not.

In Exodus 21:22-25, the Law provided that a man who struck a pregnant woman and caused harm to the child (or, presumably, to her) must make recompense anywhere from a fine up to forfeiting his life. The "eye for an eye" and "tooth for a tooth" clauses were followed with examples in which a man who blinded his servant or knocked out his tooth was obliged to give that servant his or her freedom (Exod. 21:26-27). In the second statute, whoever injured his neighbour was to have the same injury inflicted on him, and if he killed his neighbour he himself was to be killed (Lev. 24:17-24). In the third statute, the malicious person who gave false witness against an accused individual in a criminal case was to receive the punishment that he had sought against the accused (Deut. 19:15-21). In view of the connection in the immediate context to swearing falsely (Matt. 5:33-37), Matthew 5:38 probably connects specifically to the Deuteronomic statute (Guelich 1982, 219-20; Quarles 2011, 145 n. 175). In all three statutes, the law expressed the principle

of *lex talionis* ("law of retribution"), also known as *jus talionis* ("justice of retribution"), the legal principle that the punishment exacted by the law should fit the crime.

Jesus' comments on the words "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" did not address situations comparable to those covered by the Mosaic statutes:

> But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil.
> But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.
> And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic,
>   let him have your cloak as well.
> And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.
> Give to the one who begs from you,
> and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. (Matt. 5:39-42)

None of these sayings addressed situations involving the maiming or killing of human beings. The actions of the aggressors are heartless, insulting, or demeaning, but they do not belong to the classes of offenses covered in the Mosaic statutes (Nolland 2005, 257). Furthermore, Jesus said nothing about the responsibilities of the legal authorities (the court or government) but was speaking to individuals, telling them how they should behave when personally wronged in these ways. This point should not be misunderstood: Jesus was not simply prohibiting personal vengeance, since he does not say, for example, "if someone strikes you, don't strike back but let the judiciary administer the just return slap" (Carson 2010, 189). Rather (and *contra* Carson, among others), Jesus was addressing issues for which legal recourse was usually inapplicable in the first place. He was certainly "not condemning the government's right to prosecute and punish those who were guilty of robbery and violence" (Lioy 2004, 152).

Thus, what Jesus was challenging was not the Mosaic law itself but its application to insulting or offensive behaviour. His critique is directed not at *lex talionis* as a genuine legal principle but at the "abstraction" from it of "a principle of aggressive protection of one's own interests" (Nolland 2005, 257-58). "The point of *jus talionis* was not to condone personal revenge or petty payback (as in slapping back, or returning insult for insult) but to compensate fairly" (Evans 2012b, 131).

Against the application of the *lex talionis* as justification for retaliation against offensive treatment from others, Jesus instructed his disciples, "Do not resist the one who is evil" (Matt. 5:39a). The KJV translation "resist not evil," followed by the ST (3 Ne. 12:39a), is a mistake; *tō ponērō*, "the evil one," means an evil person (so even the NKJV; see also the ESV, HCSB, NAB, NASB, NET, NIV, NJB, NLT, and NRSV),

not evil as an abstraction or condition (so almost all recent scholars, e.g., Keener 1999, 197; Davis 2005, 141). The expression in context refers generically to the evil person who seeks to dishonour or take undue advantage of the disciple. This means that the Book of Mormon is mistaken in following the KJV translation. Some LDS scholars seem aware of the issue but have not addressed the problem directly. Daniel Ludlow admitted, "'Resist not evil' could have been translated 'do not resist him who is wicked'" (D. Ludlow 1982, 55). Welch quoted the text accurately in his study of the temple motif in the SM as forbidding resistance against "one who is evil" (Welch 1999, 104). Daniel Judd, in an essay on the verse, understated the matter when he acknowledged weakly that other translations "sometimes include an emphasis on the embodiment of evil," but he could list only the Douay-Rheims Bible as agreeing with the KJV (Judd 2010, 7-8).

Not only should *tō ponērō* have been translated "the one who is evil," but the translation of the verb *antistēnai* (an infinitive form of *anthistēmi*) as "resist" is at least questionable. Admittedly, all of the major contemporary English versions use the same verb. The lexicon BDAG gives "resist" as one sense of the Greek verb but its primary sense, which it assigns to Matthew 5:39, is "be in opposition to, *set oneself against, oppose*," a more active, aggressive sense than the word "resist" may seem to connote. Since the verb has different meanings in different contexts, one must consider the context of the discourse unit as a whole (Matt. 5:38-42) in determining its nuance here. Against those who have construed the verb in a narrowly prosecutorial or legal sense (e.g., Guelich 1982, 220), Charles Quarles has made a good case for concluding that "the verb refers to all retaliatory actions, violent, verbal, or legal" (Quarles 2011, 148).

While Jesus' instruction not to retaliate against the evil person may be generalized as a principle applicable to situations other than the specific ones he mentioned, it should not be absolutized to forbid all punitive actions by human governments. Jesus' words are also misused if they are interpreted as a rebuke to citizens who oppose totalitarian regimes or who use force in defending their families against violent attack. The general instruction not to retaliate against the one who is evil is immediately illustrated by four specific examples (Davis 2005, 140): "Do not retaliate against the one who is evil, but rather [*all'*]...." These examples all pertain to situations in which one's honour, not one's life, is at stake (Neyrey 1998, 203; Malina

and Rohrbaugh 2003, 46). The slap on the right cheek (5:39b) was a backhanded slap, "an insult, the severest public affront to a person's dignity" (Keener 1999, 197; similarly B. Young 2007, 209-210; Quarles 2011, 151; and many others). Having one garment taken away because of an unpaid debt is embarrassing enough, but giving up one's other garment (apparently implying nakedness) would be especially shameful (5:40). Being forced by Roman soldiers to carry their gear for a mile was an indignity that Jews naturally regarded as highly dishonouring (5:41). Those prosperous enough to be approached by individuals begging for gifts or loans (5:42) may have felt associating with such persons to be beneath them. In such situations, Jesus told his disciples that they were not to respond by retaliating against or trying to shame those who were dishonouring them.

Two of the examples Jesus gave may have been culturally meaningful to the Nephites. Insulting slaps on the cheek (3 Ne. 12:39b) are mentioned several times in preexilic biblical narrative contexts (1 Kings 22:24; 2 Chron. 18:23; Job 16:10; Lam. 3:30; cf. Micah 5:1) and so may have been familiar to the Nephites. Begging and borrowing (3 Ne. 12:42) are not culturally specific activities. On the other hand, Jesus' other two examples assumed the cultural context of Jews in Galilee and Judea.

The injunction, "And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well" (Matt. 5:40; cf. 3 Ne. 12:40) presupposed the Old World Jewish cultural context in two ways. First, the reference to two garments, an inner garment and an outer one, reflected the standard apparel of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern society across the socio-economic spectrum. Apparel in Mesoamerica, where little clothing was necessary for physical well-being, was quite different. Nothing comparable to shirts, tunics, or coats were part of the ordinary Mesoamerican man's clothing, or of women's, for that matter (Anawalt 2001a).

Second, it was common Jewish legal practice to allow a lender to require from the debtor that he give up his tunic, or inner garment, as a pledge or collateral while a debt remained unpaid. The cloak or outer garment could not be held as a pledge overnight since it often doubled as a blanket for the poor, and nights were typically quite cold. This provision of Jewish law was laid down in the Torah (Exod. 22:25-27; Deut. 24:12-13, 17), and thus might have been known to some of the Nephites (as noted in Welch 1999, 160), but it would not have been culturally relevant to them

(just as it is not to most modern readers). It was, however, extremely relevant to first-century Jews in the Old World. In the first half of the first century, Philo commented on the law at length (*On Dreams* 1.92-101; also *On the Virtues* 89), as did Josephus toward the end of the first century (*Ant.* 4.267-69). The later texts of the Mishnah and Talmud incorporate comments on the statute reflecting a long tradition of concern with regard to its proper application (see Davis 2005, 119-21). Thus, as with his teaching in the other "antitheses," Jesus was commenting here on a question of the interpretation of Mosaic law that was a matter of ongoing interest and concern in his Jewish culture.

Jesus' instruction, "And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles" (Matt. 5:41; cf. 3 Ne. 12:41), would have been especially foreign and irrelevant to the Nephites. The conventional—and as shall be shown, correct—view of the saying is that it referred to the indignity of Roman soldiers impressing Jewish subjects into temporary service. Some Mormon scholars have resisted this understanding of Jesus' saying. Eric Huntsman claimed that the saying "reflected not so much unique Roman practice but rather the ability of any superior to coerce or demand favors" (Huntsman 2010, 103). In an endnote he pointed out that the practice has been documented as far back as "the Persian postal service" (108 n. 42). Of course, the claim is not that the practice of commandeering individuals from conquered nations for temporary service was *unique* to the Romans but that it was *characteristic* of the Romans in Jesus' culture—a practice to which Jesus was referring quite specifically. Huntsman's endnote concluded, "The fact that such demands were not seen as specific to the Roman occupation is [shown by] Jesus' use of the same example in a New World context in 3 Nephi 12:41" (108 n. 42). Such an argument is question-begging.

Welch did not discuss the meaning of Matthew 5:41 or 3 Nephi 12:41 in his book on the ST (though he quoted the passage, Welch 1999, 72-73). In his later book on the temple theme in the SM, however, he offered an alternative interpretation of the saying (without mentioning its relevance to the Book of Mormon). Going the second mile, according to Welch, probably did not refer to being conscripted by Roman soldiers for a mile, since "given the small number of Roman soldiers actually present in Judaea and Galilee" the disciples were not likely to have that experience. Rather, Welch suggested it more likely that Jesus was referring to

men being conscripted by Jewish authorities for public works or Temple service (107-108). "Nothing would preclude a priest or Levite from taking an extra turn at the altar or an extra janitorial shift" (Welch 2009, 108). This interpretation is consistent with Welch's purpose of finding the Temple everywhere in the SM, but it is as strained as it is creative. Jesus' saying refers to someone forcing a man to labour for a particular distance; it is difficult to see how one can find in this saying a reference to such activities as serving at the altar or performing janitorial service.

Welch's claim that Roman conscription of Jews would be an unusual experience because there were few Roman soldiers is a weak objection. The total population of Roman Palestine at the time of Jesus is unknown, but it was probably less than a million, counting Jews and Gentiles of various places of origin (see Goodblatt 2010, especially 104-106, for a recent overview of the question). The number of soldiers serving in the provincial army of Judaea and Samaria (apparently excluding Herod Antipas's domain in Galilee) was about three thousand (Haensch 2010, 73). The odds of a Jewish man at one or more times during his life being conscripted by soldiers were therefore not as remote as Welch's objection suggests. Besides, Jesus is giving an illustration, which does not depend for its effectiveness on the specific experience being commonplace.

The Greek verb *angareusei* used in Matthew 5:41 ("compel," KJV) is also used in the same Gospel in reference to the Romans commandeering Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus' cross (Matt. 27:32; likewise Mark 15:21). These are the only occurrences of the verb in the NT (it does not appear in the LXX). In addition, the Latin loan word *milion* in Matthew 5:41, from which the English word *mile* derives, confirms the Roman context of Jesus' saying. The term *milion* literally meant a thousand paces with each pace equal to five feet; because men's feet were slightly shorter on average than they have been in modern times, the *milion* became standardized at what in today's English measurements would be 4,854 feet, about 0.92 of an English mile (Kamm 2008, 144). These two facts strongly support the traditional interpretation (Davis 2005, 145). In addition, Jesus' reference to his hearers' "enemy" in the next group of sayings (Matt. 5:43-44) flows naturally from this saying as referring especially to the detested Roman conquerors.

In addition to the internal contextual evidence just considered, the external historical context shows that Roman military conscription and requisition of citizens'

labours and properties, including beasts of burden, was a widespread problem in Jesus' day. In AD 19, about ten years prior to the SM, the emperor's adopted son Germanicus wrote a letter seeking to curb abuses of the practice by soldiers in Egypt. In the early second century Roman soldiers commandeered Jews to carry supplies even on the Sabbath. These are just two examples showing that Roman conscription of Jews was a notorious and odious problem (Quarles 2011, 154-55).

On the basis of both internal and external evidence, then, a consensus of biblical scholars agrees that Jesus was referring to Roman commandeering of Jewish men for temporal service to soldiers on the road (in addition to Davis and Quarles, see, e.g., Guelich 1982, 222-23; Betz 1995, 291; Keener 2009a, 199-200; McKnight 2013, 127). The point has been conceded by LDS scholar Daniel Ludlow, though without addressing the problem this conclusion poses to the Book of Mormon (1982, 55). Brant Gardner likewise conceded that the saying referred to Romans commandeering conquered residents and admitted that the practice "would have had no cultural referent in the New World," where the Nephites were not a conquered people. The best he can say is that despite the meaningless of the example in the Nephite culture, "the principle of foregoing retaliation was still important" (Gardner 2007, 5:432). Evidently, Gardner would take the view that Jesus said something else entirely but Joseph followed the SM saying instead.

7.6.7.6 "And Hate Thine Enemy" (Matthew 5:43-48; 3 Nephi 12:43-48)

The last of the six "antitheses" is the most difficult to interpret to mean that Jesus was challenging or intensifying the teachings or statutes of the Torah. In both the SM and the ST, Jesus begins by citing the directive, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy" (Matt. 5:43b; 3 Ne. 12:43b). The first clause is an exact quotation of part of Leviticus 19:18 LXX (*agapēseis ton plēsion sou*). However, the second clause appears nowhere in the Torah or for that matter anywhere in the OT. Yet the two clauses together are introduced in the Book of Mormon with the words, "And behold it is written also," in notable contrast to the Matthean wording "Ye have heard that it hath been said" (Matt. 5:43a KJV).

Mormon scholars have long known that the words "and hate thine enemy" do not correspond to any statement in the OT. BYU scholar Ellis Rasmussen acknowledged in a 1975 article in in the official LDS magazine *Ensign* that Jesus

"was quoting what was traditionally said, not citing a statement actually written in the law" (Rasmussen 1975). Another BYU scholar, Larry Dahl, in a later article in the *Ensign* agreed that the statement "is not found in the Old Testament" (Dahl 1991, 10). LDS scholar Eric Huntsman likewise admitted, "No actual passage in the law directed Israelites to hate their enemies" (Huntsman 2010, 103). Frank Judd, another Mormon scholar, agreed: "But the written law never dictated hating one's enemy. The directive seems to have been part of the oral tradition of at least some Jews" (F. Judd 2005, 321-22). Gardner agreed with Judd that the clause "does not have a scriptural referent and may be part of the oral law" (Gardner 2007, 5:433). None of these LDS scholars explains why the Book of Mormon presents Jesus as introducing the statement with the words "it is written," in context a scriptural citation formula, if it was not in Scripture.

At least one LDS commentator, Monte Nyman, has suggested that "perhaps this teaching was lost from the original text" (Nyman 2003, 189). Despite its simplicity, few Mormon scholars have advocated this explanation. As noted above, most of them have understood the words to represent an extrabiblical tradition or interpretation, not a lost statement of Scripture.

Welch recognized that 3 Nephi 12:43 is a "problematic passage" because it "raises the question of whether the Nephites would have known where it was written, 'Hate thine enemy'" (Welch 1999, 173). He admitted that the statement is not in the OT, and suggested that this explains why "in this particular instance Jesus does not say to the Nephites, 'It is also written *before you*' (3 Nephi 12:43), as he did with the first law against murder" (Welch 1999, 173). This suggestion does not fit the facts: the Book of Mormon reports Jesus using this expression only in that first unit; yet the quotations "thou shalt not commit adultery" and "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" (3 Ne. 12:27, 38) are exact quotations from the OT. Furthermore, the Book of Mormon explicitly reports that the Nephites had the Ten Commandments, which are quoted in verses 21 and 27 (Mosiah 13:12-24). In any case, Welch's way of framing the issue begs the question of whether the words "and hate thine enemy" were written *anywhere*. The evidence shows that they were not a part of any scripture and that the introductory words "and behold it is written also" are simply a mistake.

Biblical scholars have documented examples of Jewish teachings current in Jesus' day advocating hatred toward enemies, especially from the Dead Sea Scrolls

of the Qumran community. The opening section of the *Community Rule* (also known as the *Manual of Discipline*) is perhaps the most often-quoted example. It stated that God "commanded by the hand of Moses and all His servants the Prophets; that they may love all that He has chosen and hate all that he has rejected…and that they may love all the sons of light, each according to his lot in God's design, and hate all the sons of darkness, each according to his guilt in God's vengeance" (1QS 1.3-4, 9-11, in Vermes 2004, 98, 99). John Piper has called this passage "the most explicit command to hate in the environment of the early church" (Piper 1979, 40). The statement is cited in many commentaries on Matthew 5:43 (e.g., Keener 1999, 203; Wilkins 2004, 252; France 2007, 225; Luz 2007, 288; Turner 2008, 176; Osborne 2010, 212; C. Evans 2012b, 133). Several Mormon scholars have also agreed that Jesus was referring to an interpretive tradition typified by Qumran (Judd 2005, 321-22; Skinner 2005, 346-47; Gardner 2007, 5:433-34; Huntsman 2010, 108 n. 44).

While there is no denying that the *Community Rule* shows that the position Jesus criticized was a live option in his Jewish culture, there are reasons to think that he was probably not referring specifically to Qumran or to the Essenes generally. In the context of Matthew 5:17-48, the evidence reviewed up to this point shows that Jesus was engaging popular understandings of the Torah as typified specifically in scribal and Pharisaic interpretive traditions (note especially 5:20). As Menahem Kister pointed out, "There is no hint in Jesus' words that they are aimed against the Qumranic teaching, according to which one should love only the members of his community and hate those who are God's enemies (i.e., all those who are not members of one's sect)" (Kister 2005, 129 n. 51; similarly Betz 1995, 304). More likely, then, Jesus' criticism of the gloss "and hate your enemy" was directed at an interpretation advocated by some Pharisees.

As has been mentioned a few times, documenting specific interpretations of the Pharisees is complicated by the fact that almost all of the relevant literature was compiled and given its written form beginning around AD 200. Nevertheless, there is some evidence in the rabbinical literature of a position similar to the one Jesus criticized and that may have gone back to the time of Jesus. As an example of the kind of interpretation Jesus was opposing, Berndt Schaller cited *Sifra* on Leviticus 19:17b-18, which he quoted as follows: "You shall not take revenge on nor be hateful to the sons of thy people. You may take revenge on and be hateful to other

men. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Schaller 2005, 87). *Sifra* as a complete and settled text cannot be definitively dated, but much of its content dates from the third century AD and earlier (Strack and Stemberger 1996, 263).

Later in the same discourse unit, Jesus asks rhetorically what is ethically superior about loving only one's loved ones and friends (Matt. 5:46-47). These two sayings are omitted in the ST, probably because of their references to "publicans" (KJV), and replaced with new text (3 Ne. 12:46-47; see above, §7.5.13). Their omission in the ST notwithstanding, their presence in the SM is certainly relevant to understanding the import of "hate your enemy" in Matthew 5:43. The references in these two sayings to tax-collectors (v. 46) and Gentiles (v. 47, cf. ESV, et. al.) clearly show that by "enemy" in this context was meant the Romans and their Jewish collaborators. Kister saw Jesus' sayings here as a rebuke to the attitude expressed in a Palestinian Targum to Leviticus 19:18 in the *Targum Neophyti*, which translates the verse into Aramaic to say, "Love your friends (literally: those who love you) who are like you!" (Kister 2005, 128). Even though the texts of these Targums date from centuries later than Jesus, "they certainly include some ancient exegetic and targumic traditions that go back to the Second Temple period" (128), as must be the case here where "the Targum so strikingly matches Jesus' *objection* to the interpretation of the biblical verse" (128-29).

Jesus' sayings in this discourse unit (Matt. 5:43-48), then, engaged an interpretive tradition pertaining to Leviticus 19:18 that was attested in a variety of ancient Jewish sources, including the Qumran scrolls and later rabbinical texts that compiled comments on that text representing a centuries-long stream of discussions that no doubt went back to the time of Jesus and even earlier.

No plausible explanation can be given for why Jesus would repeat his critique of an interpretation of Leviticus 19:18 prevalent in Jewish didactic traditions of the Old World when speaking to the Nephites. The problem is not obviated by claiming that the Nephites "would have had no difficulty understanding Jesus' meaning" (Welch 1999, 173). They most certainly would have had difficulty understanding why Jesus was (supposedly) claiming that something was written in Scripture (as 3 Nephi 12:43 states) that wasn't written in Scripture. No doubt they could have understood that Jesus wanted them to love the Lamanites rather than hate them, as Welch suggested (Welch 1999, 173-74; similarly Gardner 2007, 5:434). But Jesus could

have made that point without injecting into his remarks a critique of a Jewish interpretation of Leviticus 19:18 that was not part of the Nephite cultural context. Thus, as it stands 3 Nephi 12:43 remains an unsolved problem in two ways: its reference to the proposition as written (in Scripture), and its contextually out of place engagement with a very particular interpretive tradition that was specific to the postexilic Jewish culture of the Old World.

7.6.7.7 Conclusion: Jesus and the Torah

The conclusion just stated with regard to 3 Nephi 12:43 applies more broadly to all of 3 Nephi 12:21-48. Throughout this major section of the ST, the Book of Mormon represents Jesus repeating substantially what Matthew quoted Jesus as saying in the SM, though with more changes than to any other parts of the sermon. The changes are undeniably meant to show Jesus adapting the material from his pre-crucifixion Galilean sermon to the new context of his post-resurrection visitation to the culturally different Nephites (most notably in 3 Nephi 12:18b, 19b, 26, 35, 46-48). Therefore, if the ST really were a translation of an ancient report of a sermon Jesus preached to the Nephites, one would expect the ST to be *consistently* adapted to its new context. Yet throughout 3 Nephi 12:21-48, Jesus is quoted as addressing what the foregoing study has shown were specific instances of oral interpretations of the Torah put forward by scribes and Pharisees for discussion and debate in Jesus' Jewish culture in first-century Palestine. The Book of Mormon entirely misses that cultural context of the six "antitheses," misrepresenting Jesus as quoting written Scripture and then presenting new laws that intensified or transcended the old ones. It also repeats in the ST statements made by Jesus in the SM that presupposed shared cultural points of reference and a specific political and social environment in Galilee that differed markedly from that of the Nephites. These problems are not loose ends in an otherwise coherent account of a plausible sermon by Jesus to the Nephites; to the contrary, these problems pervade 3 Nephi 12 and demonstrate that the ST is not an authentic account of an ancient sermon.

7.6.8 Hellenistic Jewish Culture, Ancient Mesoamerica, and 3 Nephi 13-14

As was shown in detail at the beginning of this chapter, the text of 3 Nephi 13-14 is verbally so close to that of Matthew 6-7 in the KJV that there really can be no reasonable doubt that the former was copied from the latter. Specifically, it was shown that 3 Nephi 13 has 95.3% of the exact words in Matthew 6 KJV and 3 Nephi 14 has 99.7% of the exact words in Matthew 7 KJV (see §7.1.2 and Table 42). 3 Nephi 13 has only three short but notable omissions (the kingdom and bread petitions in the Lord's Prayer and a reference to Gentiles, Matt. 6:10, 11, 32) and two short but notable additions (a statement urging the giving of alms and a statement directing the discourse on anxiety only to the twelve, 3 Ne. 13:1, 25a) to the SM. Except for the omission of the reference to Gentiles (on which see §7.5.12), these alterations do not reflect any cultural differences between Nephites and Galileans. 3 Nephi 14 does not differ significantly from Matthew 7 in any respect.

It has already been shown that the Old World context of Jews living in the Hellenized civilization under Roman rule pervades the material in 3 Nephi 12, despite its containing far less of the exact words of Matthew 5 and containing much more extensive revisions and additions than 3 Nephi 13-14. It follows, *a fortiori*, that 3 Nephi 13-14 will also reflect the historical, cultural Old World context of the SM. This section discusses some especially noteworthy examples.

7.6.8.1 The Theatre

The English word "hypocrite" is a transliteration of the Greek word *hupokritēs*, a word found only twice in the Septuagint, where it translates a Hebrew term *hānēp* meaning profane, godless, or irreligious (Job 34:30; 36:13). In the NT it is found only in the Synoptic Gospels in sayings of Jesus, most of them in Matthew (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16, 7:5 [par. Luke 6:42]; 15:7 [par. Mark 7:6a]; 22:18; 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29; 24:51; Luke 12:56; Luke 13:15). The related abstract noun *hupokrisis*, "hypocrisy," occurs once in the Septuagint (2 Macc. 6:25) and three times in the NT (Gal. 2:13; 1 Tim. 4:2; 1 Peter 2:1), while the verb *hupokrinomai*, "to pretend, to be hypocritical," appears eight times in the Septuagint (2 Macc. 5:25; 6:21, 24; 4 Macc. 6:15, 17; Sir. 1:29; 32:15; 33:2). As LDS scholar Brant Gardner correctly stated, the personal noun *hupokritēs* "simply meant actors, literally those who acted on a stage" (Gardner

2007, 5:440). As the two occurrences in Job (and the related forms in the OT Apocrypha) illustrate, before Jesus' lifetime the term was already being used in some contexts metaphorically to refer to a person pretending to be something he was not (see also Josephus, *Wars* 2.586-87 [2.21.1]). This was no dead metaphor, however: Jesus' use of the term turns out to reflect a very specific cultural referent involving actors on a stage in the immediate vicinity of his Galilean sermon.

During Jesus' lifetime Herod Antipas had built a theatre in Sepphoris (known today as Tzippori or Tsipori), a city never mentioned by name in the NT but situated only about four miles (six kilometres) north by northwest of Nazareth. The exact date of the theatre's construction is unknown, but it was probably early in the first century AD, during Jesus' youth or young adult years (see especially Batey 2006). It is not impossible that Jesus or his father, or both, as carpenters found work helping to build the theatre. When it was first built, the theatre sat 2,500 people, so it is likely that many Galileans, perhaps even Jesus himself, had attended one or more performances there. What is quite clear, in any event, is that Jesus was familiar with the theatre and with the nature of the performances it held. There are some nine allusions to the theatre in Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18 (see Evans 2012b, 137-43, 150-51, for most of these):

1. The insincerely pious wish "to be seen" (*theathenai*, related to the noun *theatron*, "theatre") by others (Matt. 6:1).
2. The blowing of trumpets (Matt. 6:2) was a conventional means of signalling a scene change in the theatre. Trumpets had no particular association with almsgiving; the description is a metaphor. "The sounding of the trumpet comes from the Greek theater, not the Jewish temple of synagogue" (Evans 2012b, 140, and sources cited there).
3. The term *hupokritēs* literally meant an actor (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16).
4. The main "reward" sought by actors was that of the honour or "glory" (Matt. 6:2) they would receive in the form of accolades for their performances. (Two thousand years later, this much remains true.)
5. The directive not to let one's left hand know what the right hand is doing (Matt. 6:3) alludes to the coordination of hand motions by the performers. Such synchronization of the hands was part of the formal training of rhetoric for orators and was also utilized by actors: "The left hand never

properly performs a gesture alone, but it frequently acts in agreement with the right," Marcus Fabian Quintillian, *Institutio Oratio* 11.4 (ca. AD 95).

6. The term "street corners" (Matt. 6:5) was also used to refer to a street in Sepphoris lined with colonnades.

7. The imagery of a man standing in the street corner and speaking loudly to be heard by passers-by (Matt. 6:5) alludes to actors speaking in public places (perhaps even giving previews of their performances) to attract audiences to the theatre.

8. The ridicule directed at long, meaningless prayers (Matt. 6:7) may allude to the long soliloquies delivered by actors during a play.

9. The statement that the hypocrites "disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast" (Matt. 6:16) alludes to the practice of using makeup to paint actors' faces in keeping with their parts.

The constellation of elements alluding to the theatre in this short passage (Matt. 6:1-8, 16-18; recall that 6:9-15 is a compositional insertion, see §5.4.4.3) make it reasonably certain that Jesus was deliberately using the Greek theatre as a key source of metaphorical language and imagery. This conclusion cannot be refuted by arguing that this or that element need not allude to the theatre; it is the cumulative effect of the multiple connections that establishes the allusion. Jesus' sayings presupposed the shared knowledge among Galileans of the conventions of the theatre that would have become familiar to most or all of them as a result of the theatre in Sepphoris.

All of the allusions to the Greek theatre in Matthew 6 are found unchanged in 3 Nephi 13:1-8, 16-18. Yet no understanding of these allusions would have been possible among the Nephites. Not only would they have had no familiarity with the Greek theatre, what evidence is available indicates that the ancient peoples of Mesoamerica (where most LDS scholars seek to locate the Book of Mormon narratives) did not have a similar institution. "Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica yields little or no evidence of a literary theatre in which a prescribed dramatic text was performed by a cast of actors before a single, stationary audience" (Harris 2001, 333). Even in the period immediately preceding the arrival of the Spanish, "text-based performances were embedded in a festive and religious context that rendered the relationships among text, performers, and audience far more like those of a

communal fiesta than those of the professional theater" (ibid.). Ancient Mesoamerican cities had pyramids, plazas, and palaces, but evidently no theatres; their main "entertainment" venues were ballcourts (Fuente 2001, 45).

It is true that the Nephites might have been able to comprehend the main points Jesus was making in these sayings even though they would have missed the allusions to the theatre. However, this is rather like saying that Ethiopians who had never watched American television might be able to grasp teaching that alluded repeatedly to sitcoms even if they were not able to get the joke. Jesus' critique of Pharisaic piety was a kind of extended joke, ridiculing their pious airs by sly allusions to the antics of actors in the local Greek theatre (which the Pharisees no doubt viewed with contempt). It is simply not plausible that Jesus, more knowledgeable about Nephite culture than any cross-cultural missionary could hope to be, would awkwardly repeat sermon material delivered in Galilee that depended for its rhetorical punch on allusions the Nephites could not possibly have grasped.

7.6.8.2 The Synagogue

While Jesus' sermon only alluded to the pagan Greek theatre, it referred explicitly to the Jewish synagogue. The references to synagogues in the SM (Matt. 6:2, 5) are repeated unchanged in the ST (3 Ne. 13:2, 5). References to synagogues pose a problem of anachronism in the Book of Mormon.

The term *synagogue* appears 26 times in the Book of Mormon. The first occurrence is in 2 Nephi 26:26, in a speech dated in the sixth century BC. The last occurrence is in Moroni 7:1, referring to a synagogue in the early fifth century AD. Most of the occurrences—21 out of the 26—are in the first-century BC settings of the books of Alma and Helaman (Alma 16:13; 21:4 [*bis*], 5, 11, 16, 20; 23:2; 26:29; 31:12, 13; 32:1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12; 33:2; Helaman 3:9, 14). There are Jesus' two references to synagogues in the SM repeated in the ST in the first century AD (3 Ne. 13:2, 5 = Matt. 6:2, 5), and one more reference to synagogues in another saying attributed to Jesus (3 Ne. 18:32). The synagogues of 3 Nephi 13, then, are mentioned as a feature of Nephite culture extending throughout the millennium-long Book of Mormon narrative from the sixth century BC to the early fifth century AD.

In these texts it is clear, beyond any reasonable controversy, that the Book of Mormon uses the term *synagogues* to refer to man-made buildings, enclosed

structures within which people assembled. The first reference to synagogues explains that the term refers to "houses of worship" (2 Ne. 26:26). Seven references speak explicitly of the synagogues being "built" (Alma 16:13; 21:4, 20; 31:12; Hel. 3:9, 14; Moroni 7:1); one of these mentions the use of "timber" in building the synagogues (Hel. 3:9). Synagogues are mentioned three times alongside temples and sanctuaries (Alma 16:13; Hel. 3:9, 14), once alongside temples (Alma 26:29), and twice alongside houses (Alma 32:1; Hel. 3:9). People are said to "enter into" and to "depart out of" the synagogues (Alma 21:5, 11; 26:29; 32:1). Thus, the Nephite synagogues were distinct buildings, enclosed structures comparable to houses, used for religious assemblies.

The Book of Mormon also states that the synagogues "were built after the manner of the Jews" (Alma 16:13). This statement in context can only mean that the Jews in the Old World had built synagogues—again meaning houses of worship, enclosed buildings within which religious assemblies took place—prior to the Lehites departing for the New World shortly after 600 BC. As Bruce McConkie years ago observed, "The Book of Mormon tells us that the Nephites had temples and sanctuaries and synagogues 'which were built after the manner of the Jews.' (2 Ne. 26:26; Alma 16:13.) It is clear from this, since Lehi and Ishmael and their families left Jerusalem just before that great city was overrun by Nebuchadnezzar, that there were synagogues in Jewish Israel before that people was taken into Babylonia" (McConkie 1979, 1:189). And that is the problem: the evidence shows that Jews did not begin constructing synagogues until centuries after the time of Lehi.

One of the earliest attempts to address the problem was made by Hugh Nibley in a book first published in 1967. According to Nibley, "The question is purely one of translation." The Book of Mormon uses *synagogue* "to designate the early Jewish assemblies" and *church* "to designate such assemblies after they had become Christian." It uses these words "not to convey what the Nephites *called* their communities, but how we are to picture them in our minds" (Nibley 1988, 164, 165). This explanation is easily falsified from the Book of Mormon text itself. In the first place, the Book of Mormon uses the term *synagogues* to refer to buildings, not to communities or assemblies. Second, the Book of Mormon refers to Christian meeting places as "synagogues" (3 Ne. 18:32; Moroni 7:1).

Nibley also tried to argue that the Jewish synagogue originated before Lehi and his people left Jerusalem, basing his argument on quotations from Solomon Zeitlin: "'The origin of the synagogue,' wrote Zeitlin, 'dates back to the time when local assemblies were occasionally summoned to consider the needs of a community.' The existence of such synagogues, he notes, was by no means restricted to the time after the destruction of the Temple" (Nibley 1988, 164-65). Nibley, though, had his Temples confused. When Zeitlin wrote in 1930, there was little or no hard archaeological evidence for synagogue buildings prior to the destruction of the *Second* Temple by the Romans in AD 70. Nevertheless, Zeitlin rightly argued, synagogues did exist prior to that time. According to Zeitlin, the OT does not refer to anything like a synagogue until the book of Esther. "This, to my mind, gives us a clue as to *the origin of the synagogue as belonging to the period after the return from Babylonia*. When the Jews returned to Palestine, they did not settle in one place only, as in Jerusalem, but were scattered over all Judea, in various villages and towns. In these smaller settlements, where they had to meet the social and economic problems that confronted them in their practical life, they summoned assemblies of all the inhabitants of the town or village" (Zeitlin 1930, 75). Thus, by "the time when local assemblies were occasionally summoned to consider the needs of a community" (Zeitlin 1930, 79), quoted out of context by Nibley, Zeitlin had meant the post-Exilic period.

According to Zeitlin, even after the Exile the synagogue as such did not come into existence right away. "The assembly, to be sure, had no permanent meeting place, but it met in different places from time to time." After reviewing the evidence, he concluded, "The synagogue as an institution, a house of reading the Torah and prayers, came into existence when the Pharisees introduced the daily sacrifice as a communal offering, a procedure to which the Sadducees were strongly opposed" (Zeitlin 1930, 76-77). In other words, Zeitlin thought the synagogue emerged as an institution centuries after the Exile, perhaps in the Hasmonean period.

In his first major book, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, John Sorenson acknowledged that "the very idea" of synagogues in the ancient Americas "seems to pose a problem for the Book of Mormon" because "many historians have maintained that synagogues were not known among the Jews until well after Lehi had left Palestine." He then claimed, "Another group of experts,

however, now argue that the synagogue predated Lehi's departure" (J. Sorenson 1986, 235). Sorenson's experts, however, did not support his claim. He quoted Albright and Mann's statement that Josiah's reforms "must inevitably have led to the establishment of non-sacrificial places of assembly" (Albright and Mann 1971, 42 [not cliii, as cited in Sorenson's endnote]), to which Sorenson added, "in effect, synagogues" (J. Sorenson 1986, 235). But that Josiah's reforms in 621 BC "*led to*" the rise of the synagogue does not mean that the synagogue existed by 597 BC. Sorenson also cited Isaac Levy, who argued that the basic pattern of synagogue *worship* existed before the Babylonian Exile. However, Levy maintained that the *institution* itself originated after the Exile through the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, when the synagogue became "a firmly established institution" (Levy 1963, 14).

In the same book, Sorenson also suggested that "a synagogue was not necessarily a building; it might be only an enclosure" (J. Sorenson 1986, 236). As has been shown above, however, in the Book of Mormon a synagogue is definitely a building. It is quite likely that the Jewish synagogues originated as local assemblies without dedicated buildings and that such buildings arose later. The unresolved problem is that the Book of Mormon clearly indicates that the Jews constructed synagogue buildings prior to the Babylonian Exile, a claim virtually all historians and archaeologists reject.

John Welch has acknowledged the problem while trying to diminish its textual basis: "The Book of Mormon, of course, lends credence to the idea that synagogues, at least as places of worship, were known to Israel before the departure of Lehi from Jerusalem (although no specific statement makes that claim)" (Welch 1992c, 194). Alma 16:13, however, clearly assumes as much; the text makes no sense on any other assumption.

Welch also tried to argue that the synagogue might have originated before Lehi and company left the Old World. "It is a matter of much scholarly debate when and how the synagogue as known to later Judaism developed. As the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* cautions, the specific origins of the synagogue are too faint 'to venture a conjecture in this kind of antiquity'" (Welch 1992c, 194). Here Welch was purportedly quoting the conclusion of a twentieth-century reference work. However, the dictionary entry by Isaiah Sonne actually was quoting a sixteenth-century Italian scholar of antiquities named Carolus Sigonius. In his book *De republica Hebraeorum*

libri VII (1583), Sigonius opined, "If it is at all admissible to venture a conjecture in this kind of inquiry, I would surmise that synagogues were first erected in the Babylonian exile for the purpose that those who have been deprived of the Temple of Jerusalem, where they used to pray and teach, would have a certain place similar to the temple, in which they could assemble and perform the same kind of service'" (quoted in Sonne 1962, 478). Notice that Sigonius did not claim that the evidence was too faint for conjecture; to the contrary, he offered what he believed was a reasonable conjecture on the matter (one that had been around since at least the tenth century, cf. Gutmann 1981, 1-4). Conjecture was really the best Sigonius could do three centuries before the advent of modern archaeology, but his suggestion that synagogues originated during the Exile, as Sonne noted, still dominated scholarship in the mid-twentieth century.

Welch named several scholars as seemingly supporting the Book of Mormon assumption that synagogues predated the Babylonian exile: "While most scholars focus their attention on the development of the synagogue in postexilic Israel, those who discuss the pre-exilic origins of the synagogue include Leopold Loew, Julian Morgenstern, Louis Finkelstein (long-time Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America), Azriel Eisenberg, and others" (Welch 1992c, 194). Welch provided no documentation for the views of these scholars. His carefully parsed statement that these scholars "discuss" (not advocate) "the pre-exilic origins" (not the pre-exilic existence) of the synagogue actually stops short of claiming any scholarly support for the Book of Mormon's assumption. Direct examination of the relevant publications shows that no such scholarly support existed then or exists now. For example, Leopold Löw was a nineteenth-century Hungarian rabbi who argued that the synagogue developed gradually from what in pre-exilic times had been a civic centre (see Beesley 2010, 108). In the early twentieth century, Louis Finkelstein's position was that "first, that there were prayer gatherings under prophetic guidance even before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., and second, that out of these gatherings there grew imperceptibly the more definitely institutionalized synagogues that played so important a role in the Maccabean age" (Finkelstein 1928, 59). None of these scholars came even close to hypothesizing that synagogue buildings existed before the Exile.

Welch's only quotation from a scholarly source on the subject of the origins of the synagogue also fails to support the Book of Mormon position. He quoted Jacob Weingreen (without documentation) as follows: "It would be natural to suppose that, following upon the enforcement of Josiah's edict, religious services continued to be held outside Jerusalem, but now without sacrifices…. These must…have constituted the basis of the synagogue service of later times" (Welch 1992, 194). The last sentence omits three words that really should have been included: "These must **have persisted and** have constituted the basis of the synagogue service of later times" (Weingreen 1976, 125, emphasis added). As the omitted words make clearer, what Weingreen was saying was that elements of localized religious services other than sacrifices persisted after Josiah's reforms and became the basic elements of what was much later the synagogue. Weingreen's point was that the elements of the service predated the Exile, not that synagogue buildings did so.

The most sophisticated defence of the Book of Mormon's references to Nephite synagogues was a 2000 article by William Adams. His argument began with citations of Lee I. Levine, a scholar who has written extensively on the origins of the synagogue. According to Adams, Levine "suggested that synagogues did exist before the Babylonian captivity in the form of chambers in the city gates" (Adams 2000, 7, citing Levine 1996). Unfortunately, this statement is at least potentially misleading, as it gives the impression that Levine argued that there were chambers in the city gates set aside for or devoted as synagogues. This impression is more overt in Adams's claim that "Levine concludes that since later synagogues closely mirror the architecture of the gate chambers, these chambers may well have been the original synagogues" (Adams 2000, 7). In actuality, Levine barely mentioned the chambers and drew no comparisons whatsoever between the architecture of the gate or its chambers and that of later synagogues (see his discussion of the city gates, Levine 1996, 432-46).

Adams acknowledged that the Book of Mormon frequently refers to synagogues as structures like houses and cautiously admitted that the text suggests "that synagogues may have been buildings" (Adams 2000, 10). He ignored this finding, though, when addressing the problem of the Nephites continuing a Jewish practice of synagogue buildings when such buildings did not exist in pre-exilic times. Adams asserted that the problem is solved by "Levine's theory of the gate-chamber

origin of the synagogue" (11). In an endnote, Adams repeated this assertion and concluded, "As things stand now, Book of Mormon critics lack a factual basis for attacking the mention of synagogues in the Book of Mormon" (76 n. 21). His argument ignores Alma 16:13, according to which the Nephites built synagogues, shown throughout the Book of Mormon to have been separate facilities, "after the manner of the Jews."

Levine developed his views on the development of the synagogue more fully in the second edition of his book on the subject (Levine 2005). He warned that one must be careful to distinguish between the synagogue as a congregation or gathering of Jews for worship and the synagogue as a type of building (22-23). Although a few scholars have proposed a preexilic origin for the synagogue as an institution (though not, it should be emphasized, as a type of building), most scholars at least until recently have traced its origin to the time of the Babylonian Exile or even later (24-28). Levine (in a modified presentation of the argument he made in his 1996 article) suggested that the synagogue as an institution had its roots in the gathering of Jewish men for both civic and religious purposes at the city gates during the period of the monarchy (28-34). "By the Hellenistic period, the functions previously associated with the city-gate and adjacent square were relocated to a building that came to be known as a synagogue" (32). City gates in Israel had ceased functioning as these gathering places, because city gates in Hellenistic architecture were simple points of entry and exit lacking adjoining rooms or open areas suitable for public gatherings. This shift in city architecture led to the construction of separate buildings to serve as assembly halls (34-41).

Levine emphasized that no precise date can be given for this development, which likely took place gradually with specific synagogue buildings appearing at different times in different places. He suggested that the synagogue as an institution with its own devoted building emerged gradually between the fifth and first centuries BC (37). Both the archaeological and literary evidence indicate that synagogues and synagogue buildings were a widespread and well known phenomenon only by about the first century BC (41-42). Levine theorized that synagogues became *primarily* religious meeting places only after the destruction of the second temple in AD 70 (135-209).

LDS scholar Brant Gardner, in his commentary on Alma 16:13, quoted Levine's book at some length, but only from his opening pages discussing various difficulties that explain why the issue of the origins of the synagogue has been rather controversial (Gardner 2007, 4:253-54, citing Levine 2005, 1, 5, 22-24). He ignored Levine's actual treatment of the issue, leaving the impression that according to Levine nothing can be concluded confidently on the matter. In fact, contemporary scholarship is *unanimous* on the point that synagogue buildings did not exist until after the Babylonian Exile. Faced with the difficult text of Alma 16:13, Gardner attributed the phrase "after the manner of the Jews" to the fourth-century AD prophet Mormon, stated that "we really have no idea what such a phrase might have meant to Mormon," and suggested that it might have indicated a "style" of building—but never addressed the issue of the fact that such buildings did not exist in pre-exilic Israel (Gardner 2007, 4:255). In a footnote, Gardner floated the idea that Mormon might have added the phrase to affirm theological continuity between the Nephites and the Jews "even if it were not historically accurate" (255 n. 15).

Finally, in his 2013 magnum opus *Mormon's Codex*, Sorenson returned briefly to the issue of synagogues in the New World. He cited Adams's article with approval as showing that such a synagogue "would have been a congregational worship site for religious instruction." He then commented, "In physical terms such a site might have been like the area Hammond referred to at Cuello, Belize: 'About 450 B.C. the [earlier small] courtyard [in the ceremonial core] was converted into a broad open platform capable of holding a large audience'" (J. Sorenson 2013, 326, brackets his).

Sorenson's citation of Hammond's article is irrelevant to the point of being troubling. Four problems should be noted.

1. Cuello is in the Maya lowlands, a region in Mesoamerica that lies outside the area in which Sorenson's own model would place the Nephites and Lamanites (see above, §6.4.1).

2. The structure at Cuello was not an enclosed building or even an enclosure but an open-air platform with a small pyramid at one end (Hammond 1986, 108).

3. The centrepiece of the platform was a ceremonial site where butchered human bodies were ritually buried. Hammond's article stated that "some two dozen butchered human bodies" were found in a saucer-like depression in the

middle of the platform (ibid.). In a 2001 encyclopedia, Hammond gave an updated account of the site at Cuello in which he reported that the mass burial "included parts of thirty-two individuals" who "may have been captives from another community." The site was shown to have "several other burials, including some of decapitated individuals," and "another mass burial of twelve males around A.D. 100" (Hammond 2001, 196).

4. The site was governed by Maya rulers, as demonstrated by the presence with some of the human remains of bone tubes with carvings of the royal mat used by the Maya rulers (Hammond 1986, 109).

Thus, the platform at Cuello was in the wrong place, with the wrong kind of structure, used for the wrong kind of ritual activity, and ruled by the wrong people. It is true that Sorenson said not that the Cuello site might have *been* a Nephite synagogue but only that Nephite synagogues "might have been like" this site "in physical terms." However, even this carefully qualified statement is incorrect. There is nothing about the Cuello site that was like a Jewish synagogue.

The fact that Mormon scholars' handling of the issue of synagogues in the Book of Mormon has been characterized by missteps and misrepresentations confirms the difficulty of the problem. The Book of Mormon clearly reports that the Nephites built synagogues, meaning distinct buildings that functioned as houses of worship, in continuity with the practice of the Jews prior to the departure of Lehi and company just before the beginning of the Babylonian Exile. Yet archaeologists and other scholars unanimously agree that while the institution of the "synagogue" as local assemblies for worship might have had roots in the pre-exilic period, synagogue buildings were a much later development, probably in the Hellenistic period of the fourth or third century BC (in addition to the studies already cited, see Grabbe 1989; Meyers 1992; Binder 1999; Runesson 2001; Levine 2010). The conclusion follows that the references to synagogues in the Book of Mormon, including the two references in the ST, are clearly anachronistic.

7.6.8.3 Other Problems

There are many other elements of the ST in 3 Nephi 13-14 that are anachronistic or otherwise out of place, or that simply reflect a distinctive feature of Jewish culture in the Old World that one would not expect in a speech tailored for a

Nephite audience in the New World. Since the presence of many such problems in the ST has already been demonstrated, and since LDS scholars have given these examples little or no attention, minimal elaboration or argument is given for these examples.

The Lord's Prayer and the *Qaddish* (Matt. 6:9-10; 3 Ne. 13:9-10). Scholars are generally agreed that the first two petitions of the Lord's Prayer are modelled on an early version of the *Qaddish*, a Jewish prayer that centuries later became part of the conventional Jewish prayer book. The earliest known form of the *Qaddish* read as follows: "Exalted and hallowed be his great name in the world which he created according to his will. May he let his kingdom rule in your lifetime and in your days and in the lifetime of the whole house of Israel, speedily and soon. And to this, say: Amen" (quoted in Keener 2009, 215-16; see also C. Evans 2012b, 145-46). Although the origins of the *Qaddish* "are shrouded in mystery," it must have originated sometime between the OT period and the Talmudic period (Blumenthal 2001, 38-39; Weitzman 2001). Thus, Jesus' model prayer for his Jewish disciples was not presented as a completely new or original prayer, but was based on a prayer that was already familiar to them—but not to the Nephites.

Mammon (Matt. 6:24; 3 Ne. 13:24a). Jesus' saying, "You cannot serve God and Mammon," uses *Mamōna* to transliterate an Aramaic word that is not in the OT but "occurs in a few of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 6:2; CD 14:20) and in the Targum, the Aramaic paraphrase of the Old Testament" (C. Evans 2012b, 157). The issue is not whether the word was in use in 600 BC or whether Lehi and his party might possibly have had an opportunity to hear the word. Even if they had, which seems unlikely, it is extremely unlikely that the Nephites would have been using this term six centuries later. John Welch commented that it was uncertain whether Jesus used the word in his speech to the Nephites or a different word that Joseph translated as *Mammon* (Welch 1999, 172). It does not seem plausible that Joseph would have been supernaturally inspired to substitute "senine" for "farthing" in one saying (Matt. 5:26 = 3 Ne. 12:26; see above, §7.5.9) but not to use either the Reformed Egyptian word or the appropriate English equivalent for whatever word Jesus used when presenting this saying to the Nephites in their language. Minimally, this text illustrates again Joseph's dependence on the KJV.

Anxiety about Clothing (Matt. 6:25, 28-31; 3 Ne. 13:25, 28-31). In Jesus' discourse unit on anxiety, he addressed three basic needs: food, drink, and clothing (Matt. 6:25-34). The references to the need of clothing here and elsewhere in the NT generally refer to problems of inadequate clothing, that is, to clothing insufficient to protect the wearer from the elements (Matt. 5:40; 25:36, 43-44; 2 Cor. 11:27; James 2:15). "Their concern was not high fashion or even modesty. Since these garments protected their bodies from the sun and the cold, they were necessary to their survival" (Quarles 2011, 261). Gardner missed the point, then, when he suggested that Jesus' sayings here "would have been particularly apt in the New World setting where the beginnings of apostasy were frequently introduced by 'costly apparel'" (Gardner 2007, 5:457). Jesus' sayings were addressed to anxiety regarding necessary clothing, not regarding dressing like the rich.

Such anxiety over having clothing adequate for one's health and survival would have been largely irrelevant to the Nephites if they were living in the tropical region of Mesoamerica. The loincloth was "the basic, indispensable male garment" throughout the region, attested in figurines from the Preclassic period and known to have been worn by the Olmec around 1200 BC (Anawalt 2001b, 339). John Sorenson acknowledged with regard to the environment of the Nephites and Lamanites that "it is plausible that tropical climate conditions usually favored freedom from clothes" (J. Sorenson 2013, 348).

The Book of Mormon repeatedly reports that wicked men would commonly go about naked except for animal skins girded about their loins (Enos 1:20; Mosiah 10:8; Alma 3:5; 43:20). These passages characterize such lack of proper clothing as immodest, in keeping with the descriptions of the men as bloodthirsty savages. The reference to animal skins is not in keeping with the supposed Mesoamerican context, since Mesoamericans did not wear garments made from animal skins or hair (Anawalt 2001a). In any case, the passages assume that people in the Book of Mormon lands generally did not need to be fully clothed in order to be well. The statements regarding clothing in the SM seem out of place, then, in the ST.

Rhetorical Questions and *Qal Wahomer* (Matt. 6:25-30; 7:9-11; 3 Ne. 13:25-30; 14:9-11). The use of rhetorical questions seen in Matthew 6:25-30 was "very popular among the contemporary Palestinian rabbis in their discussions," as was the use of the *a fortiori* argument known in rabbinical hermeneutics as *qal*

wahomer, reasoning "from the light to the heavy" (Olsthoorn 1975, 32). For example, Jesus argues that if God feeds the birds, then human beings, who are more important than birds, will surely receive what they need from God (Matt. 6:26). Though it was not entirely without precedent in the OT, the *qal wahomer* form "became extraordinarily popular among the rabbis of the first two centuries." Thus the form of Matthew 6:26-30 (and of Luke 12:24-28) "shows a remarkable similarity to favourite forms used by the rabbis" (Olsthoorn 1975, 32). The *qal wahomer* argument form appears again later in the SM and its parallel in the ST (Matt. 7:9-11; 3 Ne. 14:9-11; cf. Keener 2014, 63).

Two points are worth noting here. First, it seems unlikely (even if possible) that Nephite teachers in the first century would also happen to make frequent use of the same argument forms as Jewish teachers in the Old World. Second, the ST retains the argument forms of the SM throughout the passage except for the last rhetorical question. Where Matthew 6:30 ends with the words, "*shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?" (KJV, italics in KJV), the ST ends the same text with the words, "even so will he clothe you, if he are not of little faith" (3 Ne. 13:30). Here the Book of Mormon text converts the rhetorical question into a statement and omits the words "much more," which are a common feature of the *qal wahomer* argument form (e.g., Rom. 5:9-10, 15, 17; 2 Cor. 3:9, 11; Heb. 12:9, 25). The lack of consistency in this matter betrays the hand of an editor who was not familiar with the ancient Jewish argument forms.

Today and Tomorrow (Matt. 6:30; 3 Ne. 13:30). In the same passage just discussed, Jesus said that the grass of the field "today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven" (Matt. 6:30 ESV). The Book of Mormon retains this part of the text unchanged from the KJV. However, the pairing of "today" and "tomorrow" in this saying (also found in Luke 12:28) reflects a Jewish idiom that first appears in the literature well into the Second Temple period expressing "the transitory character of human life" associated with judgment on the impious (Olsthoorn 1975, 51; see 1 Macc. 2:63; Sirach 10:10; James 4:13-14).

Measure for Measure (Matt. 7:2; 3 Ne. 14:2). Jesus' statement, "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:2 KJV), is repeated verbatim in the ST (3 Ne. 14:2). As Jewish scholar David Flusser noted, "The saying, 'The measure you give will be the measure you get back,' was a Jewish proverb in

those days" (Flusser 2007, 58; so also Keener 2009a, 241; C. Evans 2012, 162-63; et. al.). Whereas the OT speaks of just and unjust "measures," it does not have a "measure for measure" type of statement (Massey 1991, 75). Such sayings appear in the Targums ("In the measure in which a man measures, it shall be measured to him", *Targum Neofiti* Gen. 38:26), the *Mekilta*, the *Sipre* on Numbers and Deuteronomy, and the Mishnah, which though written later than the NT attest to the proverbial, stock nature of this saying. "It was used as a well-known principle, which apparently developed from an everyday understanding of talion to an exegetical principle" (Massey 1991, 81). This saying, then, is yet another example of Jesus speaking in ways that would be quite familiar to his Jewish audience but not to a Nephite audience, even though they might have been able to understand his point.

Dogs, Swine, and Pearls (Matt. 7:6; 3 Ne. 14:6). Both the SM and the ST quote Jesus as saying, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." The references to dogs, swine, and pearls in the Book of Mormon have all occasioned some debate. Before looking at these things in relation to the Book of Mormon, their place in the Old World context of the saying in the SM should be considered.

The Bible refers to dogs about forty times, routinely in a negative light (see Schwartz 2013, 53-54). One of the first references in the OT is especially relevant to Matthew 7:6. A statute in the Mosaic law prohibited the Israelites from eating meat that had been torn from an animal's body by another animal; the Israelites were to throw such meat to the dogs (Exod. 22:31). In other words, one serves unclean food to unclean animals, and therefore it is wrong to give what is holy to unclean animals such as dogs. Such negative views of dogs were the norm in the Second Temple period; the dog that accompanied Tobit on his journey (Tobit 5:16; 10:14) is "the only dog favorably mentioned in early Jewish sources" (Menache 2013, 45; so also Schwartz 2013, 54-55).

In Jesus' day Jews often referred to Gentiles as dogs, a derogatory usage abundantly attested in later compilations of Jewish literature (see the lengthy list of citations in Schwartz 2013, 86 n. 99). This usage appears later in the Gospel when Jesus told a Gentile woman that the children's bread was not supposed to be thrown to the dogs (Matt. 15:26). Matthew quoted the woman's response that even the dogs

were allowed to eat the crumbs that fall from the table (v. 27), to which Jesus praised her faith and granted the healing of her sick daughter (v. 28). The passage reflects the designation of Gentiles as dogs but subverts it by showing the Gentiles receiving honour and blessing from Jesus (cf. Turner 2008, 388-89). Likewise in Matthew 7:6, the "dogs" are not necessarily or specifically Gentiles but anyone— even Jews!—who show themselves unable to appreciate the gospel (Quarles 2011, 292-93). Paul employed the same subverted metaphor when he referred to Judaizing heretics as "the dogs" (Phil. 3:2, misread as referring to Jews generally by Schwartz 2013, 86 n. 99).

Swine, or pigs, were famously viewed as unclean animals by Jews, despite the popularity of their meat in the Gentile world (a well-known distinctive of Orthodox Jews to this day). All three of the Synoptic Gospels reports an incident in which the demons Jesus cast out of a man possessed a herd of pigs and ran them off a cliff. In Matthew, this incident is reported very soon after the SM (Matt. 8:30-32; cf. Mark 5:11-16; Luke 8:32-33). The specific word used in Matthew 7:6 and in these accounts of the demonized pigs was *choiros*. The Septuagint used the noun *hus*, meaning a sow (female pig or swine) in its translation of the statutes in the Mosaic Law declaring the food of the pig unclean (Lev. 11:7; Deut. 14:8).

The metaphor of casting pearls before swine depends especially on the visual imagery it evokes. The nineteenth-century commentator A. B. Bruce suggested that the saying imagines pigs that "trample under foot what looked like peas or acorns, but turned out to be inedible" (A. B. Bruce 1897, 130; likewise Keener 2009a, 243; Quarles 2011, 293). Specifically, the imagery may allude to the seeds inside the carob pods that Gentiles in the area fed to swine, as mentioned in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:15-16; cf. Morton 1987).

Matthew is the only Gospel to use the word "pearl" (*margaritēs*), though it is found five times elsewhere in the NT (1 Tim. 2:9; Rev. 17:4; 18:12, 16; 21:21). He quoted Jesus giving a parable not found in the other Gospels, in which Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a merchant who went searching for fine pearls and found one pearl of great value, for which he sold everything he had in order to buy it (Matt. 13:45-46). Here the "pearl" is the true message of the kingdom, which Jesus had come to bring. In rabbinical usage as attested in later writings of the Tosefta and the Talmud, pearls symbolized good teaching (Keener 2009a, 242 n.

219). The comparison is of dubious vintage in the OT (perhaps Job 28:18 ESV, NASB, NET, NRSV, but cf. KJV, NIV, NLT; almost all versions translate the same word, *panînîm*, "rubies" or "jewels" elsewhere, Prov. 3:15; 8:11; 20:15; 31:10).

Ancient Mesoamerica had both dogs and pearls, and although technically it did not have swine it did have peccaries, which are similar enough that one might accept as plausible the Book of Mormon referring to them as swine (J. Sorenson 1986, 293, 297). The existence of these things in ancient Mesoamerica is not, however, sufficient support for the plausibility of Jesus repeating this saying to the Nephites. The meaning of Jesus' saying depends on specific metaphorical uses of the terms familiar to his Galilean audience: "dogs" as Jewish slang for Gentiles, here subverted to mean anyone who is closed to the message of the kingdom; "swine" as livestock fed by human keepers as emblematic of pagan uncleanness; "pearls" as symbolic of good, pious teaching. It is highly doubtful that any of these uses would resonate with a Nephite audience in Mesoamerica: they had no Gentiles (if one accepts the Book of Mormon narrative) and no history of referring to outsiders as dogs; peccaries were hunted but they were not herded and fed as livestock; and the metaphor of pearls as wise teaching was also likely to have been unfamiliar. Thus, even granting that the Nephites would have understood all of the words on a literal level, it is unlikely that they could have understood what the saying as a whole meant. Based on the information available, it does not appear to have been a saying contextualized for its supposed audience.

Knock and the Door Will Be Opened (Matt. 7:7-8; 3 Ne. 14:7-8). Jesus' words "knock, and it shall be opened unto you… and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened" assumed that his listeners typically lived in houses with solid doors. This was a reasonable assumption in Galilee, where main entranceways were commonly constructed with thresholds, lintels, doorposts, and doors that bolted or locked (Safrai 1987, 734; Galor 2010, 548). On the other hand, in Mesoamerica, entranceways had no doors but were instead, as Brant Gardner acknowledged, "typically hung with fabric" (Gardner 2007, 5:465; cf. Abrams 2001, 38). (Studies that refer to "doors" in ancient Mesoamerican buildings are referring to doorways or entranceways, not to physical, solid doors that open or close in those entranceways.) Gardner stated that Mesoamericans "must have substituted some other gesture for knocking," a gesture to which presumably Jesus referred when

speaking to the Nephites (Gardner 2007, 5:465). A simpler explanation is that Joseph Smith erroneously assumed that Nephite homes would have such doors. That this explanation is correct would seem to be confirmed by references elsewhere in the Book of Mormon to buildings with solid doors, even supposedly in the Jaredite culture (Alma 14:27; Ether 7:18).

Roads and Gated Cities (Matt. 7:13-14; 3 Ne. 14:13-14). Jesus' famous saying concerning the two ways is another saying that reflected an Old World cultural context: "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matt. 7:13-14 NRSV). As Craig Evans explained, this saying "reflects the architectural realities of first-century Galilee.... Cities were walled and had various gates, some wider than others, and roads, some wider than others" (Evans 2012b, 171).

Although the Book of Mormon includes this saying in the ST (3 Ne. 14:13-14, verbatim the same as in the KJV), the imagery Jesus used in this saying would not have worked anywhere in the Americas in the first century. The most architecturally developed urban centres in Mesoamerica depended mainly on natural barriers augmented at most with "supplementary walls" (Silverstein and Webster 2001, 283). There were no walled cities with gates through which people entered. Because Mesoamerica had no wheeled vehicles or draft animals for transportation, it was slow to develop a system of roads. Movement of people and materials took place largely along "informal paths and trails" until the fourth century AD (Mendoza 2001, 260-61). Thus, even though the general concept of "two ways" would have been meaningful to the Nephites (Welch 1999, 166), Jesus' imagery of broad roads and gates compared to narrow roads and gates would have been literally foreign to them, as Brant Gardner admitted (Gardner 2007, 5:468). Yet the Book of Mormon represents Jesus delivering this saying to the Nephites twice—once in the ST, and once later in a separate discourse (3 Ne. 27:33).

The mistake here cannot be explained away as the result of Joseph Smith accommodating his translation to the familiar imagery of the SM rather than giving a literal translation of a saying that presumably used different imagery. The Book of Mormon in its narrative claims that the Nephites built an extensive system of roads in the early first century AD (3 Ne. 6:8). It also claims that in the second century BC a

city in the land had both walls and a gate (Mosiah 7:10). In addition, the Book of Mormon includes statements in the context of the sixth century BC that clearly echo Jesus' saying in Matthew 7:13-14: "And again, it showeth unto the children of men the straitness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter…. And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate" (2 Ne. 31:9, 18; see also 1 Ne. 12:17; 2 Ne. 33:9; Jacob 6:11). These texts clearly reflect the same anachronism and indeed reflect the dependence of the author of the whole Book of Mormon on the Bible.

False Prophets: Wolves in Sheep's Clothing (Matt. 7:15; 3 Ne. 14:15). One of Jesus' most famous metaphors in the SM is his description of false prophets as wolves in sheep's clothing. The metaphor depends on three facts in the Old World where Jesus and his hearers lived: People domesticated and herded sheep, they used the wool of the sheep for clothing, and wolves were predators that threatened the flocks. "Sheep were the most common grazing animal in the ancient Mediterranean world, so clothes were commonly made of wool" (Keener 2009a, 235). "Sheep" was a common Jewish metaphor for God's people familiar from the OT (Ps. 74:1; 77:20; 78:52; 79:13; 95:7; 100:3; Isa. 53:6; Micah 2:12). The false prophets were predatory religious leaders who threaten to lead astray the "sheep," as idea that has some precedent in the exilic prophets (Jer. 23:1-4; 25:34-36; 50:6; Ezek. 34). Moreover, Jeremiah frequently used the term "false prophets" (in the LXX, *pseudoprophētēs*, the same word as in Matt. 7:15) in reference to such Jewish religious leaders, who falsely claimed to receive revelations assuring that Jerusalem would not be conquered (Jer. 6:13; 29:7-16; 27:9; 29:8).

While hypothetically the Nephites might have been somewhat familiar with the imagery based on knowledge of the scriptures their ancestors had brought with them on the brass plates, such imagery would at best have been archaic and disconnected from their own culture and environment. Mesoamericans kept almost no domesticated animals (dogs and turkeys were the main exceptions). There were no sheep or other animals that might be confused with sheep, and no animals were kept for use in the production of clothing. "Mesoamericans had no knowledge of the wool of large animals until the Spanish introduced sheep in the sixteenth century, so plants were the basis for all their cloth" (Anawalt 2001c, 324).

Once again, the problem cannot be explained away as the result of Joseph accommodating his translation to the version of Jesus' saying found in the ST. The Book of Mormon does not merely assume that the peoples in the New World were familiar with the domestication of sheep; it reports that they engaged in the practice themselves. Indeed, it claims that the Jaredites found sheep and many other kinds of livestock animals in the land and made use of them for food more than two millennia before Jesus' appearance to the Nephites: "all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows, and of sheep, and of swine, and of goats, and also many other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of man" (Ether 9:18). The Nephites from the sixth century BC had flocks and herds of all kinds (2 Ne. 5:11; Enos 1:21; see also Mosiah 2:3; 5:14; 7:22; 9:12, 14; 22:2-11; Alma 1:29; Hel. 6:12; etc.). A first-century BC high priest named Alma is quoted as asking the Nephites, "For what shepherd is there among you having many sheep doth not watch over them, that the wolves enter not and devour his flock?" (Alma 5:59). The question is asked in the context of the metaphor of God's people as sheep and the coming Christ as "the good shepherd" (5:37-41, 57, 60). Thus, this text presupposes that the Nephites kept sheep and had to guard against those sheep being attacked by wolves.

LDS scholar John Sorenson admitted that there is very little evidence of the domestication of animals for human consumption other than very small animals such as dogs and fowl, though he cited one study finding such evidence for hares and rabbits at Teotihuacán (J. Sorenson 2013, 310-11). Thus, the evidence clearly shows that the Book of Mormon's references to sheep and other domesticated flocks and herds of animals are anachronistic. In this light, the repetition of Jesus' saying about wolves in sheep's clothing must also be judged out of place in a speech to people living in the ancient Americas.

Grapes from Thorns, Figs from Thistles (Matt. 7:16; 3 Ne. 14:16). Jesus' rhetorical question, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7:16b), appears unchanged in the ST (3 Ne. 14:16b). Mormon scholars have given some attention to the matter of Jesus referring to grapes in the first-century New World context. Sorenson cited some secondary sources referring to the use of grapes by some indigenous Mesoamerican groups but made no attempt to show that such use was common, let alone existed, in the region around Tehuantepec two thousand years ago (J. Sorenson 2013, 307). For example, one of the groups that

he mentioned using grapes was the Opata, who lived at the time of the Spanish conquest in northern Mexico and in what is now the American Southwest. That is in the wrong region—and Sorenson gives no information as to whether the Opata used grapes in ancient times. Welch acknowledged that based on the information available, it cannot be known whether Jesus actually referred to grapes or whether he used terms referring to similar kinds of fruit. He suggests that even if Jesus had referred to grapes and the Nephites were unfamiliar with them, "the context would have made it clear to Jesus' audience that he was talking about bunches of fruit gathered from trees." He also noted that since "fig bark was used to make paper in Mesoamerica," there is no question about them having figs (Welch 1999, 174).

Debating whether ancient Mesoamericans would have known what grapes and figs were is somewhat beside the point. Jesus referred to grapes and figs because these were extremely common fruits cultivated and eaten throughout the Mediterranean world. This was not the case in ancient Mesoamerica (for example, using fig bark to make paper is obviously irrelevant to Jesus' analogy). Nor does the Book of Mormon suggest they were: 3 Nephi 14:16 is the only reference to figs in the Book of Mormon, and there is only one other reference to grapes—a quotation from Isaiah 5:2, 4 (2 Ne. 15:2, 4). Statements comparing the predictability of people's actions good or bad to the fruit produced by grapevines and fig trees were proverbial in Jesus' Old World culture (Evans 2012b, 176). If Jesus had gone to preach to ancient Mesoamerican people, presumably he would have used analogies based on commonalities of their culture. So, for example, had he chosen to use agricultural analogies, one would expect him to have referred to corn (maize), beans, squash, cacao (chocolate), or similar native agricultural commodities (cf. Rabiela 2001, 4), rather than to grapes and figs. Thus, the fact that the ST repeats the exact wording of this saying from the SM is simply another example of the lack of any meaningful contextualization of the speech in the presumed Nephite context.

7.6.8.4 Conclusion

The same sorts of difficulties evident in 3 Nephi 12, which reproduces Matthew 5 with fairly extensive revisions, have also been found in 3 Nephi 13-14, which reproduces Matthew 6-7 with minimal revisions. The ST in 3 Nephi 13-14 assumes knowledge of institutions that did not exist in the ancient Americas (Greek

theatres and Jewish synagogues). It uses words (*Mammon*), argument forms (the *qal wahomer*), idioms ("today and tomorrow"), and proverbial sayings (measure for measure) that would have been either totally unknown or extremely unlikely to have had any current use in a Nephite culture. It repeats statements from the SM that reflected the material culture of the Mediterranean world (knocking on doors, city gates and varieties of man-made roads, and domesticated swine and sheep) but not that of ancient Mesoamerica or anywhere else in the ancient Western Hemisphere. Moreover, in several instances evidence from other parts of the Book of Mormon shows that these features are attributed to the Nephite world in its supposedly historical narrative, not just in the ST. This finding directly undercuts the theory that the ST represents an authentic sermon to the Nephites but was translated using the language of the SM because of its familiarity to modern readers.

In his most recent book on the SM, John Welch observed in a footnote, "In discussions of the thoroughly Jewish character of the Sermon on the Mount, others have convincingly found Jesus' Jewishness at virtually every turn in the Sermon on the Mount" (Welch 2009, 189). That is quite right. However, by "Jewishness" here is meant, or should be meant, *the cultural, religious, and intellectual context of Jews in Palestine under Roman rule toward the end of the Second Temple era*. The point is not merely that Jesus was "Jewish" in that sense, but that his teaching was delivered to people who were also "Jewish" in that sense, tailored in idiom, reference, and allusion to people in that environment and culture. It is inconceivable that Jesus Christ would have gone to a society half a world away and employed the same idioms, references, and allusions with virtually no regard for the vast contextual differences between the two audiences.

7.7 The Sermon on the Mount Elsewhere in the Book of Mormon

Earlier it was noted that Jesus' saying in the SM about the two ways (Matt. 7:13-14) found in the ST (3 Ne. 14:13-14) is also echoed in earlier passages in the Book of Mormon (§7.6.8.3). It turns out that this is true for much of the SM, especially the second half of Matthew 6 and for Matthew 7. There are clear allusions to sayings from all three chapters of the SM scattered throughout the narrative of the Book of Mormon set chronologically in the six centuries prior to Christ's coming.

Many of these allusions to the SM come in clusters, in which several such allusions occur within the space of a few chapters of the Book of Mormon. The first such cluster occurs in 2 Nephi 28-33:

- "…they persecute the meek and the poor in heart…" (2 Ne. 28:13; cf. Matt. 5:3-4, 10).
- "…and great must be the fall thereof…. For behold, he that is built upon the rock receiveth it with gladness; and he that is built upon a sandy foundation trembleth lest he shall fall" (2 Nephi 28:18, 28; cf. Matt. 7:24-27).
- "And again, it showeth unto the children of men the straitness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter…. that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter…. And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate" (2 Ne. 31:9, 17-18; cf. Matt. 7:14).
- "…if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock" (2 Ne. 32:4; cf. Matt. 7:7-8).
- "…enter into the narrow gate, and walk in the strait path which leads to life, and continue in the path until the end of the day of probation" (2 Ne. 33:9; cf. Matt. 7:14).

The second main cluster of allusions to the SM occurs in Alma 31-34:

- "And after that they did separate themselves one from another, taking no thought for themselves what they should eat, or what they should drink, or what they should put on" (Alma 31:37; cf. Matt. 6:25).
- "…of whom were poor in heart, because of their poverty as to the things of the world…. I behold that ye are lowly in heart; and if so, blessed are ye" (Alma 32:4, 8; cf. Matt. 5:3).
- "And when I did turn unto my closet, O Lord, and prayed unto thee, thou didst hear me. Yea, thou art merciful unto thy children when they cry unto thee, to be heard of thee and not of men, and thou wilt hear them…. ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness" (Alma 33:7-8; 34:26; cf. Matt. 6:6).

- "…then shall the law of Moses be fulfilled; yea, it shall be all fulfilled, every jot and tittle, and none shall have passed away" (Alma 34:13; cf. Matt. 5:18).
- "…ye are as dross, which the refiners do cast out, (it being of no worth) and is trodden under foot of men" (Alma 34:29; cf. Matt. 5:13).

Additional allusions to the SM can be found in other parts of the Book of Mormon (e.g., Matt. 5:18 in 3 Ne. 1:25; Matt. 6:20 in Hel. 5:8 and 8:25; Matt. 6:33 in Jacob 2:18-19; Matt. 7:8 in 1 Ne. 10:19; Matt. 7:18-19 in Jacob 5:46 and 6:7; Matt. 7:23 in Mosiah 26:27; Matt. 7:27 in 1 Ne. 11:36).

Clear allusions to sayings in all three chapters of the SM can therefore be found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon. The fact that many of these allusions are clustered in two passages (2 Ne. 28-33 and Alma 31-34) is best explained by inferring that the author of those passages was drawing on the SM (whether or not he was aware that he was doing so). This use of material from the SM is consistent with the broader phenomenon of the Book of Mormon's use of the NT, documented earlier in this study (§6.9). This evidence further confirms that the ST is a modern adaptation of the biblical SM, not a translation of an authentic ancient sermon that Jesus preached to the Nephites.

7.8 The Book of Mormon, the Sermon on the Mount, and Apocryphal Gospels

In considering the claim of the Book of Mormon to be a long-lost scripture and more specifically its inclusion of an altered version of the SM, it is helpful to compare the Book of Mormon to other texts that make similar claims. Of particular relevance are apocryphal gospels, since the Book of Mormon is billed as "another testament of Jesus Christ" and since 3 Nephi, in which the ST occurs, is regarded by Mormons as a "fifth Gospel" (see especially Skinner 2012). Two such Gospels—one medieval and one modern—are examined here.

7.8.1 *Gospel of Barnabas*

7.8.1.1 Critical Background on the *Gospel of Barnabas*

The *Gospel of Barnabas*, as the name suggests, purports to be written by the first-century Barnabas (one of the apostle Paul's co-workers). It first came to

significant public attention in a 1718 book entitled *Nazarenus, or Jewish, Gentile, and Mohametan Christianity*, by Irish Enlightenment rationalist John Toland. Toland was already a figure of notoriety since his 1696 book *Christianity Not Mysterious* had been burned in Dublin (in lieu of the author) after it was found to be heretical. Toland reported having seen an Italian manuscript of *Barnabas* in 1709; that manuscript, which scholars have dated between 1588 and 1620, was eventually sold and found its way to the Austrian National Library in Vienna (Joosten 2010, 201-202). A Spanish manuscript of the work surfaced in the 1730s and excerpts of it appeared in print, but the manuscript quickly disappeared (Ragg and Ragg 1907, I-lxv); in 1976 a copy of it found in the Sydney University library was announced (Fletcher 1976). A large portion of the Spanish version remains missing. Most scholars agree that the Spanish version was translated from an Italian copy predating the Vienna manuscript (Joosten 2010, 205-209), but there are scholars defending the priority of the Spanish version (e.g., Leirvik 2001). Internal evidence (e.g., an allusion to Dante's *Divine Comedy* and references to a century-long jubilee that began in 1300 but was shortened in 1349) shows that *Barnabas* was probably written originally in Italian between about 1315 and 1348 (Joosten 2010, 209-11; cf. Beskow 1983, 12).

The actual author of the *Gospel of Barnabas*, which was written thirteen centuries after the time of the historical Barnabas, remains unknown. Some scholars have speculated that a figure named Fra Marino mentioned in the Spanish version might have been its author (Sox 1984; Slomp 1997). That *Barnabas* is dependent on the canonical Gospels of the NT is all but undeniable. Whether its author utilized other sources intermediate between the NT Gospels and his own day is largely unknown. Jan Joosten has argued that it made use of medieval Italian harmonies of the Gospels that preserved readings from the second-century Diatessaron, a harmony that clearly existed but unfortunately is not extant (Joosten 2002, 2010). Other scholars have strongly disagreed with Joosten's conclusion (notably Hollander and Schmid 2007).

Although the Italian *Gospel of Barnabas* is the earliest extant text of that name, lists dating from the late fifth century and around 700 mention a Gospel of Barnabas. Critics of the book deny that the Italian work has any relationship with that ancient writing, which remains unknown. A few Western scholars have argued for an

ancient Jewish-Christian text as the main source while not suggesting that the historical Barnabas was the author (e.g., Cirillo and Frémaux 1977).

The *Gospel of Barnabas* is a lengthy work of 226 chapters, presenting a single continuous narrative with content from all four NT Gospels, so that it is a kind of "Gospel harmony" regardless of the precise details of its sources. Oddbjørn Leirvik describes it as containing "central parts of the biblical Gospels, apocryphal Jesus-material, peculiar readings of the Old Testament, and Islamic teachings" (Leirvik 2001, 5). The Muslim perspective is evident in the book's denials that Jesus was the Son of God, its blaming the apostle Paul for propagating the distorted view of Jesus taught in Christianity, its quotations of Jesus prophesying about Muhammad, and its claim that Judas was crucified rather than Jesus. On the other hand, *Barnabas* varies from standard Muslim doctrine by identifying Muhammad, rather than Jesus, as the Messiah (Beskow 1983, 13-14; Leivrik 2001, 6-9).

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, Muslim apologists have cited the *Gospel of Barnabas* in support of Islam and against Christianity. They had long argued that the books of the Bible, including the NT Gospels, were corrupted in the process of transmission and therefore must be supplemented and corrected by the Qur'an. Now these apologists adduced the Islamic friendly *Barnabas* to buttress its case (Leivrik 2001, 10). Muslim apologists freely utilize historical-critical methods to call into question the reliability of the NT writings while typically resisting the use of such methods with *Barnabas* and above all with the Qur'an.

The *Gospel of Barnabas* clearly qualifies as an *apocryphal* gospel, that is, an account about Jesus purporting to reveal hidden truths about and from Jesus. Judging from its contents, the intention of its author was to set forth a way to honour Jesus while questioning some traditional Christian beliefs about him. Ironically, the view of Jesus advocated in Barnabas is a more exalted view than that accepted by many liberal Christians today (Beskow 1983, 14-15). Leivrik argued that *Barnabas* falls into the category of religious texts that are "pious efforts at improving the Scriptures," and mentioned both the Qur'an and the Book of Mormon as other examples of such works (Leivrik 2001, 19). As Leivrik pointed out, "any desire to improve the scriptures runs the risk of violating their foreignness" (20). Blindness to the cultural specificity of Jesus in his first-century Jewish context is a common characteristic of apocryphal gospels. "If historical research is to have any value at

all, it must be possible to conclude that a certain manuscript is not of ancient, but—in this case—of late medieval or early modern origin" (Leivrik 2001, 20). Such a conclusion is certain in the case of *Barnabas*, even if its composition was motivated by noble, sincere, and pious concerns.

7.8.1.2 The *Gospel of Barnabas* and the Sermon on the Mount

The *Gospel of Barnabas* replaces the Sermon on the Mount (SM) with several discourses it attributes to Jesus at separate times. The first of these, presented as Jesus' first sermon, introduces Jesus' discourse with the words, "And having beckoned with the hand for silence, he opened his mouth, saying" (*G. Barn.* 12). This narrative introduction is dependent on Matthew's introduction to the SM, "And opening his mouth he taught them, saying" (Matt. 5:2). The message Jesus preached according to *Barnabas* was a series of nine statements about the blessedness of God's name, each beginning, "Blessed be the holy name of God, who…" (although the fourth used a shorter wording, "And blessed be God, who…"). That there are nine of these affirmations of the blessedness of God clearly reflects the author's knowledge of the nine Beatitudes of the SM (Matt. 5:3-12).

A second discourse is also introduced in a way that even more fully echoes Matthew's narrative introduction to the SM: "One day Jesus called together his disciples and went up on to the mountain, and when he had sat down there his disciples came near unto him; and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying…" (*G. Barn.* 16; cf. Matt. 5:1-2). Then follows a discourse that weaves together statements similar to sayings in the SM with other statements, some of which appear elsewhere in Matthew and some of which do not appear anywhere in the canonical Gospels. Here is a portion of that discourse with the material clearly dependent on the SM placed in italics (*G. Barn.* 16):

> *No man can* in any wise *serve two masters* that are at enmity one with the other; for if the one *shall love* you, the *other will hate* you. Even so I tell you in truth that *ye cannot serve God and* the world [cf. Matt. 6:24], for the world lieth in falsehood, covetousness, and malignity. Ye cannot therefore find rest in the world, but rather persecution and loss. Wherefore *serve God and despise* [cf. Matt. 6:24] the world, for from me ye shall find rest for your souls. Hear my words, for I speak unto you in truth.
>
> Verily, *blessed are they that mourn* this earthly life, *for they shall be comforted* [cf. Matt. 5:4].
>
> *Blessed are the poor* who truly hate the delights of the world, *for they* shall abound in the delights of *the kingdom of* God [cf. Matt. 5:3]….

> Weigh not down your hearts with earthly desires*, saying: "*Who *shall clothe us?" or "*Who *shall* give us *to eat?" But behold the flowers* and the trees, with *the birds,* which God our Lord *clotheth* and nourisheth with greater glory than all *the glory of Solomon* [cf. Matt. 6:25-31].

A later discourse also includes statements echoing the SM (*G. Barn.* 18):

> Therefore *if one shall give you a blow on one side of the face, offer him the other* that he may smite it [cf. Matt. 5:39b]. Render not evil for evil, for so do all the worst animals; but render good for evil, and *pray* God *for them that* hate *you* [cf. Matt. 5:44b]. Fire is not extinguished with fire, but rather with water; even so I say unto you that ye shall not overcome evil with evil, but rather with good. Behold God, who *causeth the sun to come upon the good and evil, and* likewise *the rain* [cf. Matt. 5:45b]. So ought ye to do good to all; for it is written in the law: "Be ye holy, for I your God am holy; be ye pure, for I am pure; and *be ye perfect, for* I *am perfect* [cf. Matt. 5:48]."

Later still, the *Gospel of Barnabas* reports Jesus' disciples asking him, "Lord, teach us to make prayer" (*G. Barn.* 37), essentially placing the Lord's Prayer in the same kind of context as in Luke 11:1-4. However, the prayer itself is dependent on Matthew's version in the SM (cf. Matt. 6:9-13):

> "O Lord our God, *hallowed be your* holy *name,*
> *your kingdom come* in us,
> *your will be done* always, and *as it is* done *in heaven* so be it done *in earth*;
> *give us the bread for every day,*
> *and forgive us our* sins, *as we forgive them that* sin *against us,*
> *and suffer us not to fall into temptations, but deliver us from evil,*
> *for you* are alone our God, to whom pertains *glory and honour for ever*."

Notably, the version of the Prayer in *Barnabas* has a concluding line of doxology similar to that which was appended to the Matthean SM beginning in the early centuries of Christianity.

Other passages in *Barnabas* also utilize materials from the SM (G. Barn. 38, cf. Matt. 5:17-19; G. Barn. 45, cf. Matt. 6:1-2; G. Barn. 125, cf. Matt. 6:1-3). All of the material in the *Gospel of Barnabas* that resembles material from Jesus' Galilean sermon consistently evidences dependence on the Matthean SM rather than the Lukan Sermon on the Plain (SP), as when it concludes a section on returning good for evil with the statement, "be ye perfect, for I am perfect" (*G. Barn.* 18), a wording that reflects Matthew 5:48 rather than the parallel in Luke 6:36.

Three points of comparison with the ST in the Book of Mormon stand out here. First, the *Gospel of Barnabas*, like the Book of Mormon, consistently follows the Matthean SM rather than the Lukan SP. Second, Barnabas reflects the medieval form of the text of the SM, as seen notably in its inclusion of a doxology at the end of

its version of the Lord's Prayer. Third, the text paralleling the SM in *Barnabas* differs verbally from the Matthean text (in any language) far more than does the ST, yet it is virtually undeniable that *Barnabas* is at least indirectly dependent on Matthew (perhaps through a medieval harmony as Joosten argued). *A fortiori*, it follows that the ST is also dependent on Matthew.

7.8.2 *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*

7.8.2.1 Critical Background on the *Aquarian Gospel*

The *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* was first published in 1907, the same year that the *Gospel of Barnabas* first appeared in English. It is a favourite "gospel" in the New Age movement. Its author, Levi H. Dowling, was born in 1844, the year that Joseph Smith died (for Dowling's life, see Melton, 1:443-44). Dowling was born in Bellville, Ohio, about a hundred miles southwest of Kirtland, where Joseph Smith had headquartered the LDS Church for several years. He was raised by a minister in the Disciples of Christ, a denomination that like Mormonism, though in a very different way, sought to "restore" true Christianity. After short stints as a pastor and a Civil War chaplain, Levi spent a number of years writing and speaking in the Church of Christ movement, and later pursued homeopathy and activism in the temperance movement. His involvement in homeopathy apparently included or led to his involvement in the burgeoning metaphysical or New Thought movement. New Thought is a broad umbrella term for a wide variety of teachers, sects, schools, conferences, and publishers that advocated a "scientific," "positive" reinterpretation of religion as expressions of the cosmic or divine Mind (see D. Meyer 1980; Mosley 2006; notable critiques include Braden 1963; Ehrenborg 1995).

The long title gives a good idea of the nature and flavour of the book: *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ: The philosophic and practical basis of the religion of the Aquarian age of the world and of the church universal: Transcribed from the book of God's remembrances, known as the Akashic records*. The title page gives the author's name only as "Levi," and its publisher is identified as Eva S. Dowling (his wife). Later editions were published in Los Angeles by Leo W. Dowling, Levi's son (sometimes mistakenly identified as Levi, e.g., Price 2001). The "Akashic records" are not physical texts but a kind of cosmic memory of the pantheistic Mind with which theosophists and other Western metaphysical mystics were claiming to

access. Other teachers professing to have access to the Akashic records have included Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), founder of Anthroposophy, in Germany and Edgar Cayce (1877-1945), the "sleeping prophet," in America (Groothuis 1996, 201-202).

The introduction to the *Aquarian Gospel* gives a brief account of "Levi, the Transcriber of this Book": "When but a boy he was impressed with the sensitiveness of the finer ethers and believed that in some manner they were sensitized plates on which sounds, even thoughts, were recorded. Forty years he spent in study and silent meditation." Levi was commissioned to write by "Visel, the Goddess of Wisdom" because "men must know the Christ, the Love of God" (Dowling 1911, 10). Although the nature of Levi's supposed experience and vision were radically different from those of Joseph Smith, they functioned more or less in the same way, as legitimizing his claim to receive revelations about Christ that superseded those of the Gospels. "Like Joseph Smith, Levi was conscious of his special role as a prophet to a new age" (Beskow 1983, 77-78). Despite the glaring differences, the reference to the Akashic records consisting of "plates" constitutes an intriguing parallel to the story of the Book of Mormon's gold plates. It is also noteworthy that the stated purpose of the *Aquarian Gospel*, that people would know Christ, is also one of the purposes of the Book of Mormon according to its title page. Yet the two books have extremely different views about Christ.

The *Aquarian Gospel* takes the form of an expanded "gospel" narrative about Jesus, drawing freely on the canonical Gospels while rewording the material used and adding extensive new materials. It is divided into 22 sections corresponding to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and further subdivided into 182 chapters as well as verses, much like modern editions of the Bible. Much of the book is taken up with extrabiblical material about Jesus' infancy and childhood (chaps. 7-12, 16-20) and his young adult years in India, Persia, Assyria, Greece, and Egypt (chaps. 21-60). Written into this novel material, at the very beginning, is a "prophecy" concerning Levi, "a messenger to open up the book and copy from its sacred pages all the messages of Purity and Love" (*Aq. G.* 7:26). This prophecy (written of course by Levi himself) has the same function as the account in the Book of Mormon of the Genesis patriarch Joseph prophesying, "A seer shall the Lord my God raise up….

And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father" (2 Ne. 3:6, 15), referring of course to Joseph Smith Jr.

The *Aquarian Gospel* then narrates Jesus' ministry in Palestine (chaps. 65-158), his death and resurrection (chaps. 159-80), and the beginning of the "Christine Church" (chaps. 181-82). Jesus' resurrection appearances include several of the ones found in the NT Gospels as well as appearances to religious and political leaders in Jerusalem, India, Persia, Greece, Rome, and Egypt.

Scholars have noted a number of factual problems in the *Aquarian Gospel*. For example, the first verse states that before Mary was born, "Augustus Caesar reigned and Herod Antipas was ruler of Jerusalem" (*Aq. G.* 1:1), when in fact Herod the Great ruled in Jerusalem at the time and his son Herod Antipas later became tetrarch of Galilee. Edgar Goodspeed, in his brief but incisive critique, commented drolly, "This opening sentence of the new gospel does not encourage very high hopes as to its historical value" (Goodspeed 1956, 17).

Just as LDS scholars attempt to explain factual problems in the Book of Mormon, the *Aquarian Gospel* has its apologists (though none of the sophistication of many Mormons). Michael F. O'Keeffe claimed that Herod the Great was originally known as Herod Antipas and that he acquired the name "Herod the Great" because of his massive building projects. "Historians seem to have forgotten that he was originally known as Herod Antipas" (O'Keeffe n.d.). O'Keeffe offered no documentation for these claims. In fact, Herod the Great was never known as Antipas. The name of his father and grandfather was Antipater, and Herod named one of his sons Antipater and another Antipas, a variant form of the same name (Hoehner 1972, 5-6, 349). Herod was not called "the Great" during his lifetime; the descriptor originated from references to him by Josephus as *ho megas* (*Ant.* 18.130, 133, 136), which in context probably meant "the elder" to distinguish him from his sons who were also called Herod (Hoehner 1972, 6).

After attempting to deflect problems of factual accuracy and logical consistency in the *Aquarian Gospel*, O'Keeffe addressed the question that looms over everything else: "Since anyone can *claim* to have transcribed a document from mystic archives, how can one be sure the Aquarian Gospel is authentic and genuine, and not just a sham and a cruel hoax?" His answer: "Just read the *Aquarian Gospel* (carefully and completely), and you will know…. To read carefully, with a sincere,

warm heart and an open mind, is to be wise, *and the wise can understand*. The insincere reader cannot understand…. Any honest, discerning soul, who carefully and comprehensively reads this sacred book, is sure to recognize the awesome, profound Truths contained within" (O'Keeffe, n.d.). This appeal is essentially the same appeal that Mormons make when defending the Book of Mormon. The LDS missionary training manual *"Preach My Gospel"* instructs missionaries to "invite people to read the Book of Mormon and pray about its message" (Intellectual Reserve 2004). Mormons quote a verse in the last chapter of the Book of Mormon assuring readers that if they "ask with a sincere heart" God will give them the knowledge that it is true (Moroni 10:4).

7.8.2.2 The *Aquarian Gospel* and the Sermon on the Mount

The *Aquarian Gospel* loosely paraphrases and expands on the entire SM (*Aq. G.* 94-101). Like the *Gospel of Barnabas* and the Book of Mormon, it does so in a way that consistently reflects dependence on Matthew, even though the Aquarian Gospel paraphrases Jesus' sayings much more freely. So, for instance, the *Aquarian Gospel* quotes Jesus as saying, "Worthy are the strong in spirit; theirs the kingdom is…. Worthy they who hunger and thirst for right; they shall be satisfied" (*Aq. G.* 95.7, 9), sayings clearly dependent on Matthew's form of these two beatitudes (Matt. 5:3, 6) rather than the form of the Lukan parallels (Luke 6:20b-21).

The Aquarian Sermon does include some sayings that parallel sayings in the Lukan ST not found at all in Matthew's SM. These include a series of woes (*Aq. G.* 95:21-29) that follow the beatitudes (95:7-20); two of these woes parallel the first and last of Luke's four woes (Luke 6:24-26). The Aquarian Sermon also includes rewritten versions of the sayings about the blind leading the blind and about good and evil people speaking what is in their hearts (*Aq. G.* 100:22-24; 101:21-23; cf. Luke 6:39, 45). Reading these "Lukan" sayings in context, it is clear that Dowling based his Sermon on the Matthean SM, but in keeping with his method of drawing freely from all four Gospels included some material from Luke that was not in the SM. The Sermon's outline roughly follows that of Matthew, but the Lord's Prayer is moved up as close to the beginning as possible and the discourse units in Matthew known as the antitheses are reordered to fit in a schema in which Jesus offers

commentary on each of the Ten Commandments in order, though coveting is treated immediately after stealing for thematic reasons (see Table 52).

TABLE 52. THE *AQUARIAN GOSPEL* SERMON ON THE MOUNT		
Aquarian Gospel	**Description**	**Matthew (Luke)**
94:1	On the mountain	5:1
94:2-19	Prayer, fasting	6:6-18
94:20-22	Alms	6:1-5
95:1-6	Preach the gospel	
95:7-20	Beatitudes	5:3-12
95:21-29	Woes	*(Luke 6:24, 26)*
95:30-34	Salt and light	5:13-16
95:35-43	Fulfilling the Law	5:17-20
96:1-2	The Ten Commandments	
96:3-7	#1: Only one God	
96:8-16	#2: No idols	
96:17-22	#3: No misuse of God's name	
96:23-27	#4: Sabbath	
97:1-4	#5: Honour Father (force) and Mother (wisdom)	
97:5-13	#6: Do not kill	5:21-26
97:14-23	#6 (cont.): Do not resist	5:38-42
97:24-26	#6 (cont.): Do good to those who do you harm	5:43-47
97:27-30	#6 (cont.): Not the Bronze Rule but the Golden Rule	7:12
97:31-32	#6 (cont.): Be perfect as your Father-God is	5:48
98:1-15	#7: Do not commit adultery	5:27-30
98:16-20	#8: Do not steal	
98:21-23	#10: Do not covet	
99:1-3	#9: Do not lie	
99:4-11	#9 (cont.): Swearing oaths	5:33-37
99:12-15	You cannot serve two masters	6:24
99:16-21	Treasures in heaven	6:19-21
99:22-30	Do not be anxious	6:25-33
100:1-2	Golden Rule	7:12
100:3-5	Judge not	7:1-2
100:6	Golden Rule restated	7:12
100:7-19	The carnal man	
100:20-21	The splinter in your brother's eye	7:3-5
100:22-24	The blind cannot lead the blind	*(Luke 6:39)*
101:1-4	Do not throw a diamond to a dog	7:6
101:5-10	Ask, seek, knock	7:7-11
101:11-14	The narrow way	7:12-13
101:15-18	False prophets and their fruits	7:15-18
101:19-20	Not everyone who prays	7:21
101:21-23	Good and evil people say what is in their hearts	*(Luke 6:45)*
101:24-28	Miracles are not the proof	7:22-23
101:29	The house on the sand	7:26-27
101:30-32	The house on the rock	7:24-25

Although the author of the *Aquarian Gospel* was more sophisticated in his handling of the SM, the three comparisons made earlier in the case of the *Gospel of Barnabas* are also relevant here:

1. The *Aquarian Gospel*, like *Barnabas* and the Book of Mormon, consistently follows the Matthean SM rather than the Lukan SP where the two have versions of the same sayings. However, the Aquarian Gospel does incorporate into its version of the SM some of the sayings that are in the SP but not in the Matthean SM.

2. The *Aquarian Gospel* reflects some knowledge about the modern textual criticism of the text of the SM, since it omits any doxology at the end of its version of the Lord's Prayer (*Aq. G.* 94:7-11; see Table 43, §7.1.4). However, its author's knowledge was only partial, since it includes a version of the secondary line in Matthew 5:44 found in the KJV ("bless those who slander you; do good to those who do you harm," *Aq. G.* 97:25).

3. The text paralleling the SM in the *Aquarian Gospel* differs verbally from the Matthean text far more than does the ST, yet it is undeniable that the *Aquarian Gospel* is dependent on Matthew. *A fortiori*, it follows that the ST is also dependent on Matthew.

7.8.2.3 Chiasmus in the *Aquarian Gospel*?

Earlier in this study, the question of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon as an evidence for its being ancient Hebraic literature was addressed (§7.4.4). An example of a proposed chiasmus in the Book of Mormon section that includes the ST was examined (3 Ne. 17:5-10) and the chiastic analysis shown to be too flawed to support the claim. It was also noted that instances of faux chiasmus, even ones that fit nicely into a chiastic outline, were likely to appear, especially in texts marked by high degrees of repetitiousness, as is the Book of Mormon.

As a case in point, consider the *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*. Since the book was written in the early twentieth century, it is hypothetically possible for Levi Dowling to have known about chiasmus. However, there is simply no reason whatsoever to think that Dowling knew or cared about chiasmus or other Hebraic literary devices. Yet at least one chapter can be outlined in a "chiasmus" that looks far more impressive than anything in the Book of Mormon. *Aquarian Gospel* chapter

3 is the book's account of the birth of Jesus. Here is the whole passage presented in the apparent chiastic form.

Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, Chapter 3

(A) [1]The time was nearly due for Jesus to be born,

    (B) and Mary longed to see Elizabeth, and she and Joseph turned their faces toward the Judean hills.

      (C) [2]And when upon their way they came to Bethlehem the day was done, and they must tarry for the night. [3]But Bethlehem was thronged with people going to Jerusalem; the inns and homes were filled with guests, and Joseph and his wife could find no place to rest but in a cave where animals were kept; and there they slept.

        (D) [4]At midnight came a cry, a child is born in yonder cave among the beasts. And lo, the promised son of man was born.

          (E) [5]And strangers took the little one and wrapped him in the dainty robes that Mary had prepared and laid him in a trough from which the beasts of burden fed.

            (F) [6]Three persons clad in snow-white robes came in and stood before the child and said, [7]All strength, all wisdom and all love be your, Immanuel.

              (G) [8]Now, on the hills of Bethlehem were many flocks of sheep

                (H) with shepherds guarding them.

                  (I) [9]The shepherds were devout, were men of prayer,

                    (J) and they were waiting for a strong deliverer to come.

                      (K) [10]And when the child of promise came, a man in snow-white robe appeared to them, and they fell back in fear.

                      (K') The man stood forth and said, [11]Fear not! behold I bring you joyful news.

                    (J') At midnight in a cave in Bethlehem was born the prophet and the king that you have long been waiting for.

                  (I') [12]And then the shepherds all were glad; they felt that all the hills were filled with messengers of light, who said, [13]All glory be to God on high; peace, peace on earth, good will to men.

                (H') [14]And then the shepherds came with haste

              (G') to Bethlehem and to the cave,

             (F') that they might see and honour him whom men had called Immanuel.

          (E') [15]Now, when the morning came, a shepherdess whose home was near, prepared a room for Mary, Joseph and the child; and here they tarried many days.

        (D') [16]And Joseph sent a messenger in haste to Zacharias and Elizabeth to say, The child is born in Bethlehem.

      (C') [17]And Zacharias and Elizabeth took John and came to Bethlehem with words of cheer.

    (B') [18]And Mary and Elizabeth recounted all the wonderous things that had transpired. The people joined with them in praising God.

(A') [19]According to the custom of the Jews, the child was circumcised; and when they asked, What will you call the child? the mother said, His name is Jesus, as the man of God declared.

Here is a simplified chiastic outline, utilizing the words shown above in red, that exhibits the apparently quite elegant chiasmus:

(A) Jesus
  (B) Mary longed to see Elizabeth
    (C) came to Bethlehem
      (D) a child is born
        (E) prepared
          (F) Immanuel
            (G) Bethlehem
              (H) shepherds
                (I) The shepherds were devout
                  (J) they were waiting for a strong deliverer
                    (K) they fell back in fear
                    (K') Fear not!
                  (J') the king that you have long been waiting for
                (I') the shepherds all were glad
              (H') shepherds
            (G') Bethlehem
          (F') Immanuel
        (E') prepared
      (D') The child is born
    (C') came to Bethlehem
  (B') Mary and Elizabeth
(A') Jesus

There is little if anything that can be said in the way of criticism against this outline. The apparent chiasmus fills the entire chapter; it begins and ends with the name Jesus (the only occurrences of the name in the chapter); the central, turning point of the chiasmus strikes a strong point (fear not); and the elements are in no way forced. Despite the strength of the outline, however, it is extremely unlikely to have been intentional, and it is certainly not evidence of the passage's antiquity or Hebraic origins. In a work of 182 chapters, it should not be very surprising that one of the chapters can be outlined as a chiasmus.

By analogy, the fact that some passages in the Book of Mormon can be outlined in chiastic form does not prove that they are ancient Hebraic compositions. The weakness of such an argument is compounded by the highly repetitious nature of the Book of Mormon and the fact that in most instances the proposed chiastic outline is flawed, as was shown to be the case with 3 Nephi 17:5-10.

7.8.3 The Book of Mormon: An Apocryphal Scripture

Apocryphal gospels often advance their theological and religious agendas by exploiting "gaps" in the NT Gospel accounts. In the case of ancient apocryphal

gospels the two most popular gaps were (1) the infancy and childhood of Jesus and (2) the forty-day period of Jesus' appearances to the apostles between his resurrection and ascension. The former gap was the setting of such books as the Protevangelium of James and the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, while the latter gap was the setting of such works as the Gospel of Mary and the Apocryphon of James (on these writings, see especially Bock 2006; Foster 2009; Ehrman and Pleše 2011).

The Book of Mormon presents a variation on the second category. It claims that Jesus Christ visited the Americas after his resurrection—specifically "soon after the ascension of Christ" (3 Ne. 10:18; see also 11:12). Most of the Book of Mormon functions as "backdrop" to this event, providing a narrative context within which Jesus' visit to the Americas took place. In that setting Jesus is reported as addressing the issue of how baptism was to be performed (3 Ne. 11), preaching a somewhat more overtly Christian version of the Sermon on the Mount (12-14) and explaining its meaning regarding the Law (15), justifying the claim that Jesus would go to the Americas (15-16), establishing a church and ordinances there (18-20), confirming the special place of America in God's plan (21), quoting the Bible to show how these things fit into its prophetic visions (22-26), and warning that the Nephite church will not last (27).

In short, the Book of Mormon is just the sort of apocryphal scripture one might expect from an American restorationist Christian in the early nineteenth century. Within this context, the book of Third Nephi constitutes a kind of apocryphal gospel, complete with a version of the Sermon on the Mount. Like the versions of that sermon in the *Gospel of Barnabas* and the *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, the Book of Mormon's version of the sermon reflects the religious and cultural context of its modern author, consistently follows Matthew rather than Luke where the two have parallel sayings in that sermon, and reflects at least in some places the slightly inferior medieval text of the Greek NT. No wonder that Stephen Prothero's chapter on Joseph Smith, in his book *American Jesus*, sets Joseph and the Book of Mormon in the cultural context of American "reincarnations" of Jesus in such apocryphal scriptures as the *Aquarian Gospel* (Prothero 2003, 161-99).

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter has examined in detail the Sermon at the Temple (ST), the version of the Sermon on the Mount (SM) that appears in the Book of Mormon. The following findings have been reached.

1. The ST is dependent on the SM as it appears in the KJV. This dependence includes instances of the ST following over a dozen secondary textual variants inherited by the KJV from the medieval Greek manuscript tradition. No wording in the ST reflects an authentic text of the SM that could not have been reasonably known by Joseph Smith. The only place where the ST reflects a text superior to the one followed in the KJV is Matthew 5:22, where the fact that "without a cause" was not original was fairly well known in Joseph's day (§7.1.1-6).

2. The close verbal dependence of the ST on the KJV cannot be adequately explained on the hypothesis that Joseph simply chose (or was inspired) to follow the KJV where it was close enough in meaning to the text on the gold plates. This hypothesis is falsified by the many places in the ST where the text varies from the KJV in rather insignificant ways (§7.1.7).

3. A comparison of the ST with the SM in Matthew and the SP in Luke shows that the ST is not only dependent on the KJV for its wording but is specifically dependent on Matthew for its selection, arrangement, and presentation of Jesus' sayings (§7.2). This finding needs to be correlated with the earlier finding that Matthew's SM is an anthology of Jesus' sayings pertaining to the kingdom that expanded Jesus' historical sermon in Galilee (§5.2-5).

4. Close comparisons of the ST with other speeches attributed to Jesus in 3 Nephi 11-18 and with a speech attributed to the sixth-century BC prophet Nephi in 2 Nephi 31 call into serious question the historical authenticity of the speeches attributed to Jesus. Those speeches, except for the ST, are in style, language, and content very much like the speech attributed to Nephi and very unlike the ST. The difference is explained by the fact that of the speeches attributed to Jesus, only the ST is copied from the NT. The other speeches clearly have the same author as the author of 2 Nephi 31 (§7.4).

5. The differences between the SM and the ST are not the result of the ST originating in a different ancient setting than the SM, but rather are the result

of the SM being adapted to the Book of Mormon narrative by a modern author. The ST was found to contain rhetorical inconsistencies, sayings laboriously reworded from the KJV, attempted clarifications that altered the original meaning due to cultural confusion, stylistic and cultural anachronisms, changes based on indefensible assumptions, and simple misunderstandings of the SM. Far from being appropriately contextualized for an ancient Nephite audience, the ST is a modern revision of the SM composed by someone working directly from the KJV and making changes that reflect a modern, anachronistic, and at times muddled understanding of the SM (§7.5).

6. The material in the SM that is repeated unchanged or with only minor verbal changes in the ST poses what may be the gravest difficulty for the authenticity of the ST because it reflects specific elements of the Jewish culture and the social and political context of first-century Roman Palestine. In 3 Nephi 12, based on Matthew 5, despite heavy editing the Book of Mormon presents Jesus engaging controversial issues in the interpretation of the Torah current in that Old World context, particularly among the Pharisees, that were unlikely to have been issues, or to have been framed in the same way, in the supposed Nephite context. The problems are even more severe in 3 Nephi 13-14, which repeat Matthew 6-7 virtually unchanged from the KJV. The Book of Mormon quotes Jesus making statements that reflect Old World institutions the Nephites could not have known (Greek theatres and Jewish synagogues), using culturally distinctive idioms and other speech elements, and presupposing features of the material culture of the Mediterranean world that would not have existed or been known in the New World context of the Nephites. Other parts of the Book of Mormon show that many of these features are attributed to the Nephite world in its supposedly historical narrative, not just in the ST. This finding directly undercuts the theory that the ST represents an authentic sermon to the Nephites but was translated using the language of the SM because of its familiarity to modern readers (§7.6).

7. Clear allusions to sayings from all three chapters of the SM were found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, many of them clustered in two passages set in the sixth and first centuries BC (2 Nephi 28-33 and Alma 31-34). From this finding it is inferred that the author of those passages had knowledge of

the SM and drew freely from it, consistent with the fact that passages reflecting NT themes and specific NT texts are found throughout the Book of Mormon (§7.7).

8. The ST follows a pattern in the use of the SM in other apocryphal gospels, notably the medieval *Gospel of Barnabas*, which promoted an Islamicized Jesus, and the modern *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, which promoted a metaphysical, New Thought Jesus. Like the ST, those two apocryphal gospels each has its own version of the SM, one that follows Matthew rather than Luke, that follows the medieval Greek text of the NT (with just one exception in the *Aquarian Gospel*, just as in the Book of Mormon), and that reflected the theological and cultural context of its author (§7.8).

In the conclusion of this study, these findings are correlated with the findings in the previous chapters in order to assess the viability and plausibility of the main models or hypotheses concerning the question of the authenticity of the ST in the Book of Mormon.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 Assessing the Hypotheses

8.1.1 The Hypotheses and the Methodology

This study began by identifying three hypotheses to be considered regarding the question of the historical authenticity of the Sermon at the Temple (ST) in 3 Nephi 12-14 in the Book of Mormon (§1.3). Each of these three hypotheses, as part of its answer to the question of whether Jesus Christ preached the ST to the people that the Book of Mormon calls the Nephites, proposes some account of the relationship of the ST to the Sermon on the Mount (SM) as it appears in Matthew 5-7 in the New Testament.

1. *Literal translation view*: Jesus did in fact visit the Nephites and preach the ST to them, just as the Book of Mormon recounts. According to this hypothesis, Jesus' speech in Galilee was essentially the same as the SM (though in Aramaic rather than in Greek), and Jesus then presented that same speech to the Nephites (in their language) with only the differences reflected in the Book of Mormon. This is the traditional and still overwhelmingly preferred LDS view (defended, for example, by Cloward 1985; 1993; D. Sorenson 2004; Skinner 2010; LaFevre 2010; and especially Welch 1990; 1999).

2. *Non-literal historical view*: Jesus did visit the Nephites and preach to them, touching on many if not all of the same themes as the SM. Some of the ST reflects the ancient Nephite context, but the wording and a significant amount of the content of the ST is the result of Joseph Smith's adaptation of the English KJV text of the SM in Matthew. This view has been defended by only a very small minority of Mormon scholars (Ostler 1987, 78-79, 114; Gardner 2007, 5:396-472).

3. *Modern apocrypha view*: Jesus did not visit the Nephites, who did not exist; the ST is a nineteenth-century adaptation of the SM to fit the storyline and

message of the Book of Mormon, which is itself a nineteenth-century creation. This is the view taken by some liberal or dissident Mormon scholars (e.g., Larson 1986; 1993) and by outside critics of the Book of Mormon (e.g., Stendahl 1978; Huggins 1997).

The question is which of these three hypotheses best accounts for the available evidence, which has been examined in detail in the preceding four chapters. The procedure followed in this study is a modified version of the approach suggested by LDS scholar William Hamblin: examine the text on the two hypotheses of its being ancient and modern, compare the "relative explanatory power" of each view, and attempt to determine "which model is the most plausible explanation for the existence of the text" (Hamblin 1994, 503). The hypotheses must be recast, however, in view of the fact that everyone agrees that the SM as the author of the Gospel of Matthew wrote it is ancient—and therefore anything in the ST that matches the SM is in that respect, at least, also ancient. The issue in its simplest form, then, is whether the ST as such represents an ancient Nephite text or a modern fictive text (that incorporates material representing most of the ancient text of the SM). In addition, a mediating hypothesis of the text as a mix of ancient Nephite and modern Anglo-American elements (the non-literal historical view) is also considered alongside the two simpler models.

As explained in chapter 3, the methodology employed in assessing these hypotheses is an evangelical critical methodology. This is a methodology that employs historical and literary scholarly tools of inquiry to investigate the historical origins and authenticity of religious texts in a manner that is critical rather than dogmatic and yet is consistent with evangelical Christian beliefs and values (§3.1-2). Within these methodological parameters, the best hypothesis is the one that (1) is the most plausible, (2) is disconfirmed by the fewest accepted defeaters, (3) has the greatest explanatory scope, (4) has the greatest explanatory power, and (5) is the least *ad hoc* (§3.3.3).

The procedure followed in making the assessment of these three views is as follows. First, the general plausibility of the Book of Mormon will be discussed. The issues and arguments reviewed here are relevant background to all three views. Then, the arguments pertaining specifically to the literal translation and the non-literal historical views of the ST will be considered in turn. In each case, the

arguments of the major proponents of the first two views (Welch and Gardner) are reviewed separately and a concluding assessment of each made on the basis of the five criteria listed above. Then the evidence pertaining to the modern apocrypha view is considered and a concluding assessment of the modern apocrypha view presented in terms of the same five criteria.

8.1.2 The Plausibility of the Book of Mormon

As defined in chapter 3 of this study, plausibility pertains to the degree to which a hypothesis coheres with general beliefs that one holds prior to and independent of the issue that the hypothesis addresses. In assessing the plausibility of the hypotheses, a simple five-level scale will be used. A hypothesis may be said to be *highly implausible*, *somewhat implausible*, *of indeterminate plausibility*, *somewhat plausible*, or *highly plausible*. Here the issue that the hypotheses address is whether the ST is a translation of an authentic ancient sermon preached by Jesus to the Nephites. Thus "plausibility" for the purposes of this study pertains to background assumptions and beliefs of relevance to the hypothesis, including one's view of the Book of Mormon.

Both the literal translation view and the non-literal historical view of the ST presuppose that the Book of Mormon is an inspired translation (of some kind) by Joseph Smith of the text on the gold plates that Joseph is said to have dug up under the guidance of the angel Moroni in September 1827 and kept in Joseph's custody for most of the next two years. Since this study is undertaken from the approach of an evangelical critical methodology, the existence of God, divine inspiration, angels and angelic appearances, miracles, and ancient scriptures are all stipulated as not just plausible but as given or assumed (in this context) to be true. This does not mean, however, that any story involving such elements is inherently plausible.

With regard to a scripture text purported to be translated in modern times from an ancient document, the lack of any extant copy of the supposed ancient document immediately diminishes the plausibility of said scripture, even within the worldview parameters of Christian belief in God, miracles, and angelic appearances, and (suspending evangelical reservations) openness to the possibility of new revelations. The lack of any such extant copy of the document in its original language is sufficient grounds to place the burden of proof decisively on the text

purporting to be a modern translation of the non-extant document. Since all are agreed that no copy of the Reformed Egyptian text of the Book of Mormon is extant (the "Anthon transcript" being of uncertain provenance and *at best* a copy of characters from a different part of the gold plates, so that it cannot be compared to any part of the Book of Mormon), initially the Book of Mormon must be deemed somewhat implausible. This means that in order to conclude that the Book of Mormon is somewhat or highly plausible the burden of proof must be overcome by good evidence that the English version was indeed translated from such an original-language text.

In examining the historical evidence pertaining to the origins of the Book of Mormon, many considerations were adduced in support of the conclusion that the received account from Joseph Smith was implausible and in some respects even demonstrably false. It was shown that Joseph was engaged in treasure-seeking activities using seer stones in accordance with popular magical folk beliefs throughout most of the period from 1823 to 1827 when he was supposedly receiving annual visitations from Moroni regarding the gold plates. It was also shown that Joseph attempted to cover up the facts about this activity in his official account of the origins of the Book of Mormon (§6.2.1.2). While angelic visitations are accepted as plausible, the nature and extraordinarily large number of Moroni's alleged visitations to Joseph were found highly implausible (§6.2.1.3).

Since the gold plates themselves would have been non-supernatural, inanimate physical objects, kept by Joseph, it should have been simple enough to show the plates at least to his wife, his parents, and his closest associates while he had them and was working on his translation. Yet until just prior to their disappearance, no one was allowed to see the plates—and when Joseph finally allowed eleven male family members and supporters to view the plates, this was done under conditions Joseph personally controlled. Various problems pertaining to the testimonies of the eleven witnesses were cited that cumulatively called into question their reliability (§6.2.1.4). While conceding that Joseph may have had metal plates of some kind, reasons were given for thinking that they were not the gold plates he claimed—notably the fact that the witnesses who reported lifting the plates estimated their weight at between 40 to 60 pounds, far below the weight that gold plates of the dimensions Joseph described would have had. It was shown that a

more plausible explanation for the plates Joseph apparently had was that he manufactured them out of tin from his family's cooper shop (§6.2.1.6-7).

Serious problems were also documented pertaining to the supposed instrument that Joseph used to translate the gold plates. In his official "history" (later made part of the Mormon scriptures) and in other statements he made, Joseph claimed to have translated the Book of Mormon from the gold plates using the "Urim and Thummim," stone spectacles found with the plates in a stone box shown to him by Moroni. No one else ever saw these stone spectacles, and several difficulties concerning them were pointed out (§6.2.1.8). Moreover, those who actually watched him dictating any of the translation reported that Joseph used a seer stone—the same instrument he had previously used for treasure hunting. This means that Joseph lied when he claimed to have used the Urim and Thummim that came in the stone box (§6.2.1.8-9). However Joseph produced his translation, he did so without actually using the gold plates; that is, he did not look at the plates while dictating his translation, but instead, at least when others observed him, looked at his seer stone in his hat. For all practical purposes, then, the gold plates were irrelevant to the origin of the English text of the Book of Mormon (§6.2.1.10).

Prior to the production of the manuscript from which the Book of Mormon was eventually published, some events transpired that also call into question Joseph Smith's claims. In early 1828, Joseph sent Martin Harris to New York City with a piece of paper containing characters supposedly copied from the gold plates, which Harris showed to at least two scholars. One of these scholars, Charles Anthon, later gave his own account of what happened: he looked at the characters, saw that they were a hodgepodge of characters from various unrelated languages and of other unintelligible markings, and advised Harris that he was being duped. Joseph's official account claimed that the paper contained characters copied from the gold plates along with a translation of those characters, that Anthon authenticated both the characters and the translation, and that Anthon wrote a certificate saying so but tore it up when he heard that the characters came from plates revealed by an angel. Joseph's account is demonstrably and necessarily false in at least one important respect: Anthon could not have validated any translation of the characters. According to the Book of Mormon as well as Joseph's own accounts, the characters were a reformed kind of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic script—which neither Anthon

nor anyone else in the Western Hemisphere could have begun to decipher in 1828, even if the script had been in the same classic form as known ancient Egyptian texts. Thus, here again Joseph's account is not only implausible but contains demonstrable misrepresentations of the facts (§6.2.2).

The other early event—one that almost ended the Book of Mormon project—was the loss of 116 pages of manuscript that Joseph had dictated to Martin Harris in the spring of 1828. Practically every element of Joseph's interpretation of this incident defies credibility. He gave the manuscript to Harris to show his family after supposedly receiving permission from the Lord, but then, when the pages were lost, claimed that the Lord rebuked him for allowing Harris to borrow the manuscript. He also claimed that the Lord had foreseen the loss of the pages two thousand years earlier, but instead of simply warning Joseph what would happen, had inspired the ancient Nephites to produce a second account on the gold plates of the same history for Joseph to translate in place of the first account. This second account was different enough from the one Joseph had "translated" first that he could not be accused of making mistakes if the lost pages turned up and read differently than the new version. Joseph admitted he had tried hard to find the lost pages and was unable to do so—even though he had a seer stone (supposedly useful for finding lost items) as well as access to an angel and to divine revelation. Thus, the whole matter of the lost 116 pages exposes Joseph Smith as someone who did not really have the divine gifts he claimed, critically undermining the plausibility of his claim to have translated the Book of Mormon by such divine inspiration (§6.2.3).

Turning to the text of the Book of Mormon, an array of critical difficulties further undermine the plausibility of the belief that the Book of Mormon is a translation of ancient scriptures. Mormon scholars have not achieved consensus even among themselves as to the location of Book of Mormon lands, although most seek to identify its geographical references somewhere in Mesoamerica—thousands of miles from the location in upstate New York where Moroni supposedly buried the gold plates. There appear to be intractable problems making Mesoamerica fit some of the basic geographical descriptions of the Book of Mormon lands, such as that they were bounded by four seas (§6.4.1).

In terms of history, the Book of Mormon tells of two major waves of migration to the New World, one no more than about five thousand years ago whose people

dominated the land until well into the first millennium BC, and a second migration of Jews or Israelites who arrived around 600 BC as the first people there were becoming extinct. These Israelites, who were the ancestors of the American Indians, occupied the land essentially by themselves until the Europeans arrived more than two thousand years later. In every major respect these claims stand in direct conflict with the evidence from archaeology, anthropology, and allied disciplines. The ancestors of the American Indians, the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica, and virtually all of the other inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere in the ancient world descended from people who migrated across Beringia thousands of years before 600 BC. Mormon scholars have been forced by the evidence to reinterpret the Book of Mormon—in conflict with its internal statements and with the pronouncements of Joseph Smith—as narrating events in the history of a small subpopulation in a part of Mesoamerica in order to explain away the lack of a coherent match (§6.4.2).

The Book of Mormon does not address the sorts of issues that one would expect Israelite prophets to have confronted in ancient Mesoamerica, such as its pervasive polytheism and idolatry. Instead, it addresses religious and cultural issues and questions of early nineteenth-century Protestant Americans (deism, Unitarianism, Universalism, infant baptism, whether miracles can still happen, etc.). On the other hand, it fails to anticipate the issues that have dominated Christianity in the past two centuries since it was published (evolution, religious pluralism, biblical criticism, abortion, homosexuality, etc.). This evidence strongly points to the early nineteenth century Anglo-American culture as the origin of the Book of Mormon, a severe difficulty for the claim that it was a translation (even in a less than fully literal fashion) of a book completed more than a millennium before Europeans began settling in the New World (§6.4.3).

Arguably the most egregious problem for the plausibility of the Book of Mormon is its patent, anachronistic literary dependence on the KJV Bible. The Book of Mormon quotes two dozen chapters from the OT, refers anachronistically to NT figures and places by name in passages supposedly written hundreds of years before Christ's birth, and draws over two hundred statements and passages from the NT (even apart from the relationship of the ST to the SM). Efforts by Mormon scholars to explain these textual phenomena were considered in some detail and found lacking in cogency (§6.5, §6.9).

On the other side of the ledger, Mormons have mounted various arguments in defence of the plausibility of the Book of Mormon. Three types of arguments stand out. First, Mormons have tried to show that the Book of Mormon exhibits numerous traces of ancient Hebraic literary and even grammatical style. The evidence they adduce, however, is better explained as the result of an affectation of "biblical" style by a modern author, as seen in overusing such expressions as "it came to pass" and "behold." Alleged "Hebraisms" in the Book of Mormon appear too inconsistently to be evidence that Joseph was translating (in what would have been a very literal fashion) an ancient Hebraic text (§6.3.3-4).

Second, Mormons have identified elements in the ancient Mesoamerican world that may have some connection with elements of the Book of Mormon world. Such comparisons typically involve abstracting similar-looking elements from their larger context and ignoring evidence that does not fit, a method epitomized in Mormons' efforts to draw a connection between Christ and the Mesoamerican serpent-bird deity Quetzalcoatl (§6.4.3.4).

Third, Mormons have argued that the Book of Mormon must have been translated by "the gift and power of God," as Joseph Smith claimed, because he simply did not have the wherewithal to have produced such a long, complex, literate, and insightful book. The difficulty is greatly enhanced if one accepts at face value the testimonies of Joseph's family and supporters that he dictated the translation without ever looking at a book or notes. However, reasons were given for thinking that those testimonies were at least somewhat unreliable, as even some LDS scholars have also concluded (§6.3.5). The difficulty is greatly reduced if one takes into account the fact that Joseph had dictated at least part of the narrative storyline once before (§6.2.3), the Book of Mormon's demonstrably heavy use of the OT and NT (§6.5, §6.9), and the repetitious nature of the Book of Mormon (for examples, see §7.4.3). Individuals in human history have often done things that seemed far beyond their abilities; the proper question as a matter of historical inquiry is not whether Joseph had the ability to compose the Book of Mormon but rather whether the evidence shows that he did (§6.10).

Taking into consideration all of the issues summarized here, on the basis of an evangelical critical methodology the conclusion seems inescapable that the plausibility of the Book of Mormon's claim to be translated from ancient scriptures

written on gold plates is very low. This means that the modern apocrypha view of the ST is very plausible, while the literal translation and non-literal historical views of the ST are very implausible.

Since the non-literal historical view allows for Joseph's active involvement, including his use of the Bible (even the NT), in "translating" the Book of Mormon, it might be argued that the non-literal historical view is less implausible than the literal translation view. However, that added credibility is offset by the fact that the non-literal historical view necessitates questioning Joseph Smith's own claim as to what he was doing in the translation. As pointed out in the discussion about the lost 116 pages in chapter 6, Joseph's concerns about any possible discrepancies in a new translation of the same material should the lost pages resurface attested to his claim that he was producing a very literal translation (§6.2.3; see also §6.3.5.2).

Joseph's comment regarding the title page of the Book of Mormon is quite relevant here: "The title-page of the Book of Mormon is *a literal translation*, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated, the language of the whole running the same as all Hebrew writing in general; and that said title page is *not by any means a modern composition*, either of mine or of any other man who has lived or does live in this generation" (emphasis added). Joseph went on to reiterate that "the title-page of the English version of the Book of Mormon…is a genuine *and literal* translation of the title-page of the original Book of Mormon as recorded on the plates" (*HC* 1:71, emphasis added). What Joseph claimed here with regard to the title page, Mormons generally and quite naturally have understood as applying to the Book of Mormon as a whole (e.g., Welch 1994a, 150). Again, this understanding is confirmed by other statements by Joseph Smith, as noted above. It is also confirmed by the fact that the title page is written in the same style as the rest of the Book of Mormon. It is highly implausible to claim, as Gardner does (Gardner 2011, 287), that Joseph Smith was inspired to translate the Book of Mormon but did not understand what that meant.

Therefore, the two hypotheses that affirm the historical authenticity of the ST (both the literal translation view and the non-literal historical view) are both judged here to be very implausible. The modern apocrypha view is correspondingly judged to be very plausible. All three views, however, remain subject to further assessment

in terms of the other four criteria by which the best explanation for all of the available evidence is being sought.

8.1.3 Assessing the Literal Translation View

Since John Welch has written a book expounding the literal translation view of the ST (Welch 1999), his order of presentation in that book is followed here in reviewing his arguments in defence of that view.

According to Welch, the Book of Mormon presents the ST (and by implication the SM) as a rich temple-centred text, presupposing an authentic, ancient religious context of which Joseph Smith could not have had any natural knowledge. This is really the main thesis of Welch's book on the ST (Welch 1999, 23-122, 239-50) as well as his later book on the SM (Welch 2009). In this study, it has been shown that the arguments for viewing either the SM or the ST as a temple-centred, ritually oriented text do not hold up. The dominant theme of the SM is the Messianic kingdom that Jesus came to inaugurate, a theme that secondarily touches on the temple motif here and there (§5.6). The Book of Mormon narrative context of the ST mentions the temple to show Jesus fulfilling Malachi 3:1 literally, not to show the sermon as a temple or ritual text (§7.3). Without denying the presence of temple-related motifs in the two texts or the value of examining such motifs, then, the finding in this study is that such motifs do not demonstrate that the ST evinces its authenticity as an ancient text. In terms of the criteria employed in this study, the temple-centred model of the SM (and of the ST) does not have the *explanatory power* of the Messianic-kingdom model. By that is meant that given the temple-centred model, the resulting content of the SM is less likely than it would be given the Messianic-kingdom model. However, since the temple-centred model is not necessary to the authenticity of the ST, the finding here is merely negative, i.e., that model does not enhance the credibility of the ST, and nor does its denial undermine the text's credibility.

Welch considered other aspects of the question of the historical authenticity of the ST as well. He argued that the ST "was not simply plagiarized superficially from the Sermon on the Mount." To the contrary, it has many differences that reflect its context as a sermon to the Nephites following Jesus' resurrection and that omit both "unseemly penalties" as well as "alterations or additions" originating as

Christian polemic against Pharisees, Gentiles, and Paul (Welch 1999, 146, see 125-50). In this study, it has been agreed that the ST is not "plagiarized" per se from the SM (which would imply that the author intended that the relationship between the two texts would go unnoticed). However, the ST is clearly dependent in a literary sense on the SM as it appears in Matthew. It is indeed different in many places from the SM, but these differences appear almost entirely in 3 Nephi 12 (= Matt. 5) and introduce a variety of problems—rhetorical inconsistencies, new sayings clearly composed to replace supposedly objectionable ones, anachronisms, assumptions that have proven false, and misunderstandings of the SM (§7.5). Welch's claim that certain elements of the SM omitted in the ST originated not from Jesus but from later Christian polemics is untenable. The arguments for anti-Pauline influence are invalid (§5.5.4); the ST omits references to Gentiles on the (indefensible) assumption that there were no non-Israelites in the Book of Mormon lands (§7.5.13); and the whole SM took place in the context of Jesus' own polemics against the Pharisees (see especially §7.5.6; §7.6.7).

Welch also argues that very little if anything in the ST would not have been understandable to the Nephites, since they shared such a considerable Israelite background with the Jews of Galilee, especially the common heritage of the Old Testament. There are, he suggested, only a few possible problems—the words *mammon* and *raca*, the line "hate thine enemy," and the references to figs, grapes, and the Sanhedrin—and all of these can be satisfactorily explained (Welch 1999, 151-77). This study, to the contrary, has shown that there are quite a few things in the ST that would not have been understandable to the Nephites. These things include "jot or tittle," "take up your cross," synagogues, the metaphorical use of the term *dogs*, knocking on the door, entering a city through a narrow gate, wolves in sheep's clothing, and most or all of the items Welch tried to explain (see §7.5.11, §7.6.6, §7.6.7.6, §7.6.8.2, and §7.6.8.3). Each of these problems constitutes a *defeater* to the literal translation view; collectively, they form the basis for *disconfirmation* of that hypothesis.

A larger problem that Welch's argument left untouched is that the ST is not genuinely *contextualized* to what would have been a very different cultural audience. Welch argued that if Jesus referred to something unfamiliar to the Nephites, such as grapes or figs, they could still have understood what he meant from the context of

his remarks (Welch 1999, 174). But it is simply unthinkable that the risen, exalted, divine Son of God, who would have known Nephite society intimately, would go to the Nephites and clumsily use illustrations and metaphors from the Old World that were foreign to Nephite culture. Even a skilled missionary would avoid making such mistakes. As Gardner put it, "for the Master Teacher to insist on using an example that was fully understood in one culture but barely intelligible in another erroneously suggests that the Master is a less-skilled teacher in one world than another" (Gardner 2007, 226).

The study of the SM presented here in chapter 7 demonstrates that from beginning to end the SM engaged religious and ethical topics in ways contextualized quite specifically to the cultural context and situation of Jews living in the Hellenistic world under Roman occupation. In virtually every respect that contextualization remains in the ST despite the ways that it differs from the SM and despite its very different context (§§7.5-6). In this regard, the *explanatory power* of the literal translation view is extremely low. Welch is able to accommodate most of these elements of the passage to that view, but the accommodation is weak or strained at almost every turn.

Welch inadvertently admitted the principle at work here when he wrote: "While it is, of course, true that we can take individual maxims in the Sermon out of context (such as 'turn the other cheek' from Matthew 5:39, or 'lay not up treasures on earth' from Matthew 6:19) and make good practical sense of them in many applications, doing this severs these sayings from their surroundings and roots. Cut off, they do not thrive" (Welch 1999, 16). Welch was arguing that if the Sermon was a temple ritual text the reader is missing a lot if this original context is not perceived. As has already been mentioned, Welch's temple-text interpretation has been shown to be highly questionable; but the point he made here was quite correct. Yet what Welch said here refutes his claim that Jesus might have used the same idioms, illustrations, and argument forms when talking to the Nephites as he had used when talking to the Galilean Jews. Doing so would have meant "sever[ing] these sayings from their surroundings and roots" and transplanting them largely unchanged into a radically different environment.

Turning to the question of the origins of Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon, Welch argued that an understanding of the process involved

demonstrates that he could not have produced the ST apart from divine inspiration. He had only about two days to translate all of 3 Nephi 11-18 and, according to the eyewitnesses, he used no Bible or notes when he was dictating his translation and nowhere to conceal them (Welch 1999, 179-84). This defence is a more focused version of the argument, already considered, that inspiration is a more plausible explanation of the Book of Mormon as a whole than Joseph composing it on his own resources. In response to this argument, it was shown that the eyewitnesses' accounts are demonstrably unreliable at least in some respects, since Royal Skousen and other LDS scholars discount their testimonies that the scribe repeated back what Joseph dictated and the text had to be word perfect before Joseph could receive any additional translation (see §6.2.4.3, §6.3.5.2). Moreover, the accounts of Joseph's dictation sessions are not detailed or comprehensive enough to warrant confidence that he did not use a Bible on some occasions. Thus, the internal evidence of the Book of Mormon text itself must be given full weight in assessing whether Joseph used a Bible to dictate the ST (as well as the lengthy excerpts from Isaiah and other OT books). That evidence clearly shows that Joseph did in fact use a KJV Bible, whether by a prodigious feat of memory or, more likely, dictating with Bible in hand despite the claims of some eyewitnesses (§6.5). Therefore, it may be concluded that on this matter the argument that Joseph could not have produced the ST without divine help fails to enhance the plausibility of the Book of Mormon. On the other hand, it is probably fair to acknowledge that within a traditional LDS perspective divine inspiration has some genuine *explanatory power* with respect to how Joseph produced the Book of Mormon.

The claim that Joseph made use of the KJV in the Book of Mormon is a highly contested one. According to Welch, the verbal similarities between the ST and the SM in the KJV may be explained by God inspiring Joseph to see words similar to that of the KJV or to bring to Joseph's memory words of the KJV already in his mind, whether conscious or subconscious (Welch 1999, 184-86, 188). God may have inspired Joseph to use the KJV wording for several reasons: it was the language Joseph understood; the KJV was the accepted version in Joseph's day, just as the LXX was the accepted version in NT times; the Book of Mormon may have been written in archaic language; and using KJV "idiom" made it clear the translation would not need repeated updating (186-87). These explanations, however, are all *ad*

hoc; they amount to saying that God may have inspired Joseph to use the KJV to whatever extent he happened to use the KJV. Furthermore, these explanations cannot adequately account for all of the phenomena of the text of the ST:

- The ST includes minor changes to the KJV text that do not materially affect the meaning (§7.1.7). This is perhaps the most damaging evidence against the theory that Joseph was supernaturally inspired to follow the wording of the KJV. If he had been so inspired, it does not make sense that his translation would introduce insignificant verbal changes. These minor changes, then, constitute *defeaters* of the claim that Joseph was inspired to reproduce the wording of the KJV in the ST.

- These minor changes in the ST include adding unnecessary interjections— specifically *behold* and *verily*—to the text of the SM, consistent with the affectation of biblical style that pervades the Book of Mormon when it is not directly paralleling the KJV (see especially §7.1.7, §7.5.5).

- These minor changes to the KJV text appear alongside both major and minor agreements with the KJV following secondary variants in the Greek text (§7.1.4). The significance of these secondary variants is not that they unduly change the text's meaning, though in two cases they do change the meaning (contra Welch 1999, 202-208), but that they demonstrate *uninspired* dependence on the KJV. That is, if Joseph had been inspired to use the KJV wording except where it needed to be corrected, then he would not have retained incorrect renderings and secondary text in his inspired translation of the ST.

- Nearly all of the variations from the KJV in the ST come in 3 Nephi 12 paralleling Matthew 5; Matthew 6-7 KJV are virtually unchanged in 3 Nephi 13-14. It seems implausible that Matthew 5 would need such major revisions while Matthew 6-7 would need almost no changes at all. By far the more plausible explanation for this disparity is that the ST reflects a kind of redactional fatigue: having made various minor and some major changes to Matthew 5, Joseph felt he had sufficiently established that the ST was different from the SM and so did not bother making similar redactional changes to the rest of the sermon.

- Joseph's changes to the SM made only one salutary change reflecting the Greek text better than the KJV, namely, the omission of "without a cause" in Matthew 5:22. That those words were not part of the original text was fairly well known in Joseph's religious environment (§7.1.5). This change to the KJV wording, then, does not increase the explanatory scope of the literal translation view.

- On the other hand, Joseph did not improve the *translation* of the text anywhere; for example, he did not correct Matthew 5:39 or 6:13 to say "the evil one" instead of "evil" (3 Ne. 12:39; 13:12; see §7.6.7.6).

- A large fraction of the one-word differences between the SM and the ST are associated with italicized words (10 out of 35); all of these one-word differences associated with italicized words come in the Beatitudes and in the material parallel to Matthew 6-7. (In those two sections, the one-word differences associated with italicized words account for 10 out of 21 one-word differences.) Thus, where the ST substantially differs from the text of the SM, italicized words play no significant part; where it differs only slightly from the text of the SM, italicized words play a large part, especially in 3 Nephi 13-14 (§7.1.7). These facts strongly support the conclusion that the ST was *composed* using the KJV, not simply using the KJV as a basis for translating another, similar text.

In sum, then, the totality of the textual evidence pertaining to the relationship of the ST text to the KJV is not well explained by the literal translation view, which attributes the verbal parallels to divine inspiration. In this regard, that view is lacking in both *explanatory scope* (which pertains to the variety of evidence a hypothesis explains) and *explanatory power* (how well the hypothesis accounts for or makes likely the evidence), and actually has some *disconfirmation* from the presence of insignificant verbal variations from the KJV.

Welch also addressed the question of the origin of the SM in Matthew and its implications for the ST. In his view, except for certain verses that may have been later additions to the SM and that are not found in the ST, the view that most or all of the SM was composed by Jesus himself is defensible. Betz had argued that the SM is a pre-Matthean text, and the vocabulary of the SM is largely uncharacteristic of Matthew. The claim that the SM derived from something like Q is, Welch argued, an

unprovable speculation; Luke's Sermon on the Plain (SP) is probably a different sermon given on a different occasion to a larger audience. He also urged that it is reasonable to regard the ST in the Book of Mormon as new documentary evidence that the SM originated almost entirely from Jesus, thus turning the argument regarding the Synoptic problem on its head. Thus, Welch concluded, the form and content of the SM poses no problem to the belief that Jesus delivered the ST essentially as found in the Book of Mormon (Welch 1999, 211-37).

In response to these arguments concerning the SM and Synoptic origins, a review of the Synoptic problem was undertaken. Evidence was presented showing, as most Gospel scholars maintain, that Matthew used Mark as a major source and also drew on an unknown source that was also used by Luke (commonly called Q), though perhaps in two somewhat different versions (§4.9). Contrary to Welch's representation, Betz advocated a version of the Q hypothesis; he regarded the SM as stemming from a pre-Matthean source composed by Jewish Christians perhaps two decades or so *after* Jesus. A careful comparison of the SM and the SP found that the SM is demonstrably Matthew's version of the same historical sermon as the SP, expanded, arranged, and edited by Matthew to include sayings of Jesus from other occasions around the same theme (§§5.3-5).

Thus, Jesus is the original source of the individual sayings and of at least some discourse units, but the selection, arrangement, and at least a significant amount of the wording of the text is the work of Matthew (and perhaps to a lesser extent his source or sources). Where the SM and the SP have parallel material with different wording or order, the ST always follows the SM—and the ST contains none of the material that is in the SP but absent from the SM (§7.2). Thus, the evidence clearly shows that the SM was a direct literary source for the ST. In turn, this finding presents (as Welch recognized) a serious objection to the authenticity of the ST, since it is extremely unlikely that Jesus would have preached to the Nephites in AD 34 a sermon that happened to parallel so closely Matthew's anthology of Jesus' sayings written three or four decades later. The finding that Matthew's SM is an edited anthology of Jesus' sayings from various occasions, then, is a major *defeater* for the literal translation view.

The foregoing analysis may now be summed up in terms of the five criteria. (1) The literal translation view is *highly implausible*, due to numerous problems

pertaining to the origins, text, historical claims, theological concerns, and sources of the Book of Mormon. (2) Several *defeaters* of the view have been noted, including anachronistic elements in the ST, insignificant verbal differences from the wording of the KJV text in parallel passages of the SM, and the finding that Matthew composed the SM by selecting, arranging, and editing sayings of Jesus from various occasions to expand Jesus' original sermon into an anthology of his teaching. (3) The varieties of defeaters just mentioned and of other elements that the literal translation view has difficulty accommodating reveal its lack of *explanatory scope*. (4) Although the literal translation view can accommodate many elements of the SM that would have been culturally inapt in the ST to the Nephites, it can do so only very weakly; the hypothesis in this respect noticeably lacks *explanatory power*. (5) The literal translation view requires some *ad hoc* assumptions, by which is meant extraneous or gratuitous claims lacking any independent evidence and introduced to save the hypothesis. Several *ad hoc* assumptions are associated with the explanation given by advocates of this view that where the ST matches the KJV wording of the SM, God had miraculously brought the words of the KJV to Joseph's mind. For example, the suggestion that the KJV wording was used because Joseph's readers would expect it is *ad hoc*, meaning that it is a speculative explanation for which there is no evidence. Worse still, there is evidence *against* the assumption, specifically, the various minor verbal departures from the wording of the KJV.

In regards to all five criteria, then, the literal translation view scores rather low. The hypothesis is highly implausible, is disconfirmed by several defeaters, is somewhat lacking in explanatory scope and is especially weak in explanatory power, and requires some noteworthy *ad hoc* assumptions to bolster its explanatory scope.

8.1.4 Assessing the Non-Literal Historical View

In some important respects, the non-literal historical view of the ST advocated by Brant Gardner is quite different from the literal translation theory. This section will review and assess Gardner's theory, focusing especially on ways that his hypothesis differs from or goes beyond the traditional, literal translation view.

According to Gardner, Joseph Smith did in some way use the SM in the KJV "as the model for the sermon; it was not a new translation of the plate text" (Gardner 2007, 5:228). That is a surprising admission, the implications of which should be

carefully considered. Whereas the literal translation view regards the ST as a translation of the plate text that has been accommodated to the KJV text of the SM, the non-literal historical view regards the ST as an edited reproduction of the KJV text of the SM that has been accommodated to the Nephite context. The ST is not a translation based on the text of a sermon written on the gold plates, but is instead the text of the SM adjusted in some ways to be a serviceable representation of the sermon that Jesus had preached to the Nephites. Since the SM was "an available and acceptable model" for the sermon, Joseph "followed it with a few changes" (5:228). For Gardner, this understanding of the ST is unavoidable because "the overall conclusion that the King James Version forms the basis of the text is rather obvious" (5:225). Such is the case not just for the ST but for many other parts of the Book of Mormon: "The specifics of the KJV quite clearly influenced the formation of many sentences and paragraphs in the Book of Mormon where the plate text quite clearly could not have supported that particular translation" (Gardner 2011, 193).

As has already been explained, the non-literal historical view of the ST stands in fairly clear opposition to statements made by Joseph Smith about the Book of Mormon as a whole. When Gardner carefully stated, "I strongly suspect that Joseph Smith did not fully understand how he produced the translation" (Gardner 2011, 287), he understated the disparity between his theory and what Joseph actually asserted. The notion that Joseph did not know that his "translation" of the Book of Mormon passages duplicated from Isaiah, Malachi, and Matthew closely followed the KJV strains credulity (i.e., it is highly implausible). Yet in Gardner's view, this hypothesis, as difficult as it may be even for most Mormons to accept, explains the phenomena of the text better than the traditional, literal translation view.

Specifically in regard to the ST, Gardner finds that Joseph's using the SM as it appears in the KJV as the basis or model of the text of the ST explains the fact that the ST follows secondary textual variants reflected in the KJV (Gardner 2007, 5:224). It also explains anachronistic language in the text (5:225) and the fact that many of the "specific examples" of the ST reflect the Old World cultural context of the SM and would not have been applicable or contextually relevant to the Nephites in the New World (5:226).

How the non-literal historical view handles apparent anachronisms is crucial to Gardner's approach. In his view, anachronisms in the text do not undermine the

historicity of the narrative "because the translation itself could be incorrect while the underlying plate text was authentic." Matthew 5:15 in the KJV is an example: it uses the terms "candle" and "candlestick" when in fact "there were no candles in Jesus' day." "Anachronisms may be used to detect texts that are not authentic to the time they purport to describe if the anachronism is found in the original. If it exists only in translation, it simply tells us that the translator made that choice of description" (Gardner 2007, 5:225). "The issue is one of translation, not historicity" (Gardner 2007, 5:224).

An obvious objection to Gardner's argument at this point is that unlike the KJV, the Book of Mormon purports to be an *inspired* translation. Thus, whereas the KJV may introduce verbal anachronisms by using terms that reflect modern realities rather than ancient ones, one would not expect this to be the case in Joseph's translation of the Book of Mormon. That is, given that Joseph made changes to the KJV text of the SM in producing the ST, and given that he did so under divine inspiration, one would expect him to correct such anachronisms. For example, one would expect that Joseph would have replaced the words "candle" and "candlestick" with terms culturally appropriate to the Nephite context in 3 Nephi 12:15, the text parallel to Matthew 5:15; yet he did not do so. Although Gardner's explanation may be deemed possible, then, it is a weak explanation, lacking in *explanatory power*.

Although Gardner stated that the KJV text of the SM is clearly the model or source on which the ST was based, he admitted that it was uncertain as to *how* Joseph used the KJV. On the one hand, the KJV was clearly used as the model for the translation of the ST; on the other hand, eyewitness testimonies suggest that Joseph did not actually have the Bible in hand when he dictated the translation (Gardner 2007, 5:227; Gardner 2011, 303-305). Welch, in defending the literal translation view, had addressed the problem of the close verbal match between the SM in the KJV and much of the ST by positing that God had inspired Joseph to use the words of the KJV, perhaps activating his subconscious memory of the passages. Gardner's view is similar but goes much further, speculating that Joseph may have had actual pages of the KJV Bible in his "visual memory" (presumably akin to someone having what is now called a photographic memory). This visual image in Joseph's mind of the pages of the KJV Bible was specific enough to include distinguishing which words were italicized, since Gardner acknowledged that Joseph

made many of his changes in connection with the italicized words of the KJV. However, Gardner theorized that Joseph's visual memory of the KJV Bible pages did not include the chapter divisions, because Gardner accepts the claim of Royal Skousen and other LDS scholars that the text Joseph "saw" had different divisions. Gardner concluded that Joseph was miraculously enabled to call up those visual images in his mind (Gardner 2011, 305-306).

Two kinds of problems with Gardner's explanation may be highlighted here. First, the claim that Joseph Smith "saw" pages of the KJV Bible down to the italics but not the modern chapter divisions is *ad hoc*. That is, the only reason for proposing that Joseph was miraculously enabled to see pages from the Bible in such detail yet did not see the chapter divisions is that this claim allows Joseph's translation to agree with the KJV as much as it does while still supposedly being produced without using the KJV. There is no reason why Joseph would see the KJV italics but not the KJV chapter breaks and no evidence that this is what happened. Second, the arguments in defence of the claim that Joseph's translation was based on a text that lacked the traditional chapter divisions have been considered and refuted. The Bible from which Joseph derived his biblical material, whether in his hand or in his head, clearly had the traditional chapter breaks, as was shown from the quotations of Isaiah 2-14 in 2 Nephi 12-24 and especially of Isaiah 53 in Mosiah 14 (§6.5.5). That evidence constitutes a strong *defeater* to this part of Gardner's hypothesis.

According to Gardner, the Book of Mormon translation is best understood primarily in terms of a "functional equivalence" model of translation, in which the translation "adheres to the organization and structures of the original but is more flexible in the vocabulary. It allows the target language to use words that are not direct equivalents of the source words, but which attempt to preserve the intent of the source text" (Gardner 2011, 156). Some elements of the text may represent "literalist equivalence," meaning basically a word for word correspondence between the translation and the plate text, while other elements may represent "conceptual equivalence," material that is only tenuously related to the plate text and may even consist of "wholly modern additions" that are faithful to "the original intent" (156). The proper "default" view of the translation, however, is that of "functional equivalence"; that is, the translation should be assumed to give functionally equivalent statements

that correspond to those of the plate text though not in a word for word fashion. One should accept a word for word correspondence at one extreme, or a conceptual expansion with no direct correspondence at the other extreme, only on the basis of "specific evidence" that requires such deviation from the norm (247).

With regard to the ST, Gardner's default view that the text is "functionally equivalent" to what was said on the gold plates means that by and large, the ST represents what Jesus said to the Nephites on the sentence level. The meaning or point of each sentence corresponds to the meaning or at least the point or principle of the plate text sentence. One can see this from Gardner's verse-by-verse critical analysis and exposition of the ST (Gardner 2007, 5:396-472). For example, Gardner admitted that the sayings about offering one's cloak and going a second mile, as stated, were not relevant to the Nephite context but suggested that Jesus might have said something that articulated the same principles (Gardner 2007, 5:432). This explanation comes close to a thought-for-thought view of the relationship between the plate text and the translation text. In Gardner's exposition, however, each sentence of the ST corresponds to some thought that was expressed in a sentence (or the rough equivalent) on the gold plates.

A significant difficulty for regarding all or nearly all of the statements in the ST as having some "functional equivalence" to statements on the plate text arises from the findings earlier in this study concerning the relationship of the SM to the SP (Luke's Sermon on the Plain, Luke 6:20-49). As was explained in some detail, Matthew composed the SM by augmenting Jesus' historical Galilean sermon, which probably looked more like the SP, with sayings and discourse units probably spoken on other occasions (§5.3). For example, it is most likely that the "lilies of the field" discourse was spoken on another occasion, as shown in Luke 12:22-31, as was Jesus' presentation of the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2-4). If this conclusion, endorsed by the vast majority of biblical scholars, is correct, then it is highly unlikely that Jesus happened to preach a sermon to the Nephites that included sayings parallel to all of those sayings found in the SM but found elsewhere in Luke.

The finding that the SM is an anthology of sayings historically spoken by Jesus on various occasions and not all in one speech constitutes a *defeater* of Gardner's interpretation of all or nearly all of the sayings in the ST as having had some functional correspondence to sayings on the gold plates. If Jesus did not

deliver a sermon in Galilee that had the content and arrangement of the SM, then it follows with virtual certainty that he did not deliver such a sermon to the Nephites.

As has already been explained, Gardner's view turns on the argument that the apparent anachronisms in the ST can be characterized as mere translational anachronisms (pertaining to word choices in the English translation) rather than as historical anachronisms (pertaining to the supposed ancient context of Jesus' Nephite sermon). The difficulty of reconciling translational anachronisms with an inspired translation has already been mentioned. However, even assuming that difficulty can be overcome, many of the anachronisms in the ST are demonstrably historical and not merely translational. That is, an examination of the sayings in the ST in the context of the rest of the Book of Mormon proves that the anachronisms pertain to the ancient Book of Mormon setting. Because this is really the fatal flaw in the non-literal historical view of the ST, the most compelling examples of historical anachronisms associated with the ST will be briefly reviewed here.

Swearing by substitutes for God (3 Nephi 12:33-37): The Book of Mormon drops the reference in Matthew to swearing by Jerusalem, but retains the rest of the SM discourse unit of Matthew 5:33-37 (§7.5.12). The change reflects the fact that the Nephites had long been cut off from Jerusalem; the retention of the rest of the discourse unit, then, assumes that Jesus addressed the subject of oath-taking more or less as quoted in the ST. However, it is not plausible that the Nephites had independently developed a casuistic tradition of assigning greater binding force to oaths sworn by heaven, earth, or other things than oaths sworn by God's name. The problem is not limited to the ST. The Book of Mormon reports the fourth-century AD Nephites swearing by the heavens *and* by God's throne (Mormon 3:9-10, 14), which Gardner was forced to suggest was Joseph Smith's mistaken paraphrase of whatever the Nephites actually swore (Gardner 2007, 6:73-74). Surely, though, if Joseph had been inspired to know that the gold plates reported Nephites swearing an oath that Jesus had forbidden three centuries earlier, he would also have been inspired to know what that oath was. The Book of Mormon also reports wicked Jaredites using the very same kinds of oaths (Ether 8:14) two millennia or more before the practice originated among the Jews. Here again, the practice has been completely disconnected from its true cultural context—the wicked Jaredites swear by God *as well as* by the other things—and is set a continent away and long before it

historically originated. Gardner's commentary on Ether 8 took no notice whatsoever of the particulars of the oath and so did not address the problem at all (Gardner 2007, 6:250-51). In short, this passage exposes a serious problem of anachronism that Gardner cannot explain as merely translational (§7.6.7.4).

Synagogues like those of the Jews (3 Nephi 13:2, 5): Jesus referred twice in the SM to the Jews' synagogues, and these statements are repeated here in the ST. Since Alma 16:13 states that the Nephites built synagogues "after the manner of the Jews," these passages all presuppose that the Jews had synagogue buildings before the Babylonian Exile—an idea rejected by all historians. Gardner, recognizing the problem cannot be explained as a translational matter, attributes the error to Mormon (Gardner 2007, 4:255). But Mormon would have had no reason to attribute synagogue buildings to the Jews, and Gardner's speculative explanation as to why he would do so—to express "theological continuity" between the Nephites and the Jews—is too implausible a way around the problem (§7.6.8.2).

Roads and gated entrances to cities (3 Nephi 14:13-14): Jesus' saying about the two roads and two gates (Matt. 7:13-14) presupposed a culture with walled cities and roads leading to them with gated entrances. The imagery would have been literally foreign to the Nephites, as Gardner admitted (Gardner 2007, 5:468). Yet the Book of Mormon represents Jesus delivering this saying to the Nephites twice— once in the ST, and once later in a separate discourse (3 Ne. 27:33). The mistake cannot be explained away as the result of Joseph Smith accommodating his translation to the familiar imagery of the SM. The Book of Mormon narrative claims that the Nephites built an extensive system of roads in the early first century AD (3 Ne. 6:8) and that in the second century BC they had a city with both walls and a gate (Mosiah 7:10). These texts are clearly historically anachronistic, not merely translational anachronisms. In addition, the Book of Mormon includes statements in the context of the sixth century BC that clearly echo Jesus' saying in Matthew 7:13-14 (2 Ne. 31:9, 18; see also 1 Ne. 12:17; 2 Ne. 33:9; Jacob 6:11). These texts reflect the same anachronism and indeed reflect the dependence of the whole Book of Mormon on the Bible, not just the passages that parallel or quote passages in the Bible (§7.6.8.3).

Shepherds, sheep, and wolves (3 Nephi 14:15): Jesus' reference to wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15) depends on three facts in the Old World where Jesus

and his hearers lived: People domesticated and herded sheep, they used the wool of the sheep for clothing, and wolves were predators that threatened the flocks. Ancient Mesoamericans, however, had no sheep or other animals that might be confused with sheep, and no animals were kept for use in the production of clothing. One might suppose the difficulty could be viewed as a translational anachronism: perhaps Jesus made the same point when he preached to the Nephites but used a different metaphor. Yet the Book of Mormon refers to both the Jaredites (Ether 9:18) and the Nephites domesticating sheep and many other livestock animals (2 Ne. 5:11; Enos 1:21; see also Mosiah 2:3; Alma 1:29; Hel. 6:12; etc.), and even refers in a first-century BC context to shepherds guarding sheep against wolves (Alma 5:59). These references cannot be explained away as translational issues, for the simple reason that ancient Mesoamericans did not practice the domestication and herding of livestock in anything like what the Book of Mormon describes. Thus, the references to sheep constitute genuine anachronisms of historical relevance (§7.6.8.3).

These four historical anachronisms associated with the ST pertaining to oaths, synagogues, gates, and sheep are all significant *defeaters* for the non-literal historical view. Again, the crucial point in each case is that the ST presupposes that these things were historically part of the New World cultures of the Nephites because of what is said about these things in other parts of the Book of Mormon.

The foregoing analysis may now be summed up in terms of the five criteria in the same manner as was done for the literal translation view.

(1) The non-literal historical view is *highly implausible*, due to numerous problems pertaining to the origins, text, historical claims, theological concerns, and sources of the Book of Mormon. While this view seems to handle some problems better than the literal view, it creates a new and extremely difficult problem by undermining Joseph Smith's own claims as to what he was doing in the translation.

(2) Several *defeaters* of the view have been noted, including the finding that the SM was Matthew's anthology of Jesus' teaching from various occasions. The most compelling defeaters, however, are those elements in the ST that are definite historical anachronisms.

(3) The defeaters just mentioned lessen the *explanatory scope* of the non-literal historical hypothesis, though it fares quite a bit better in this regard than the literal translation view.

(4) The non-literal historical view clearly accommodates many elements of the SM that would have been culturally inapt in the ST to the Nephites in a more effective manner than the literal translation view. In this regard, the *explanatory power* of Gardner's view surpasses that of the literal view. Nevertheless, its explanatory power is weakened by the fact that those elements of the ST that were culturally specific to the Old World context are pervasive throughout the speech. The non-literal historical view is predicated on the assumption that Jesus' speech to the Nephites was similar enough to his speech to the Galilean Jews that Joseph Smith was inspired to use the latter as the base text for his translation representing the former. This assumption is weakened as the number of places in the ST increases where the text of the SM must be acknowledged to have been significantly different from Jesus' Nephite speech.

(5) The non-literal historical view requires an *ad hoc* assumption similar to that of the literal view with regard to how the text of the ST came to match that of the SM in the KJV so closely. The proposal that Joseph was inspired to see in his "visual memory" not just words of the KJV but the pages down to the italicization, but not the chapter divisions, is clearly *ad hoc*.

The non-literal historical view, then, accounts for the evidence better than the literal translation view, but still has some noticeable difficulties. The hypothesis is just as implausible if not more so than the literal view. It avoids some but not all of the defeaters of the literal view. Its main advantages over the literal view are its greater explanatory scope and power, though some difficulties were adduced for these criteria as well. Finally, its explanation of how the ST reproduced so much of the wording of the SM in the KJV was shown to entail an egregiously *ad hoc* assumption that Joseph was inspired to see pages of the KJV Bible including their italicization but not their chapter divisions.

8.1.5 Assessing the Modern Apocrypha View

The modern apocrypha view of the ST is that it is not an authentic report of a speech made in the first century by Jesus to the Nephites, but a nineteenth-century

fictive adaptation of the SM from the Gospel of Matthew in the KJV as part of the Book of Mormon, which is regarded as a modern work of Christian apocrypha. Note that this view is not simply a denial of the two historical views but takes a position with regard to the time period and means by which the ST originated. More specifically, in this study the hypothesis has been fleshed out as pointing to Joseph Smith as composing the ST in 1828 or 1829.

Numerous considerations were adduced earlier calling into question the plausibility of the Book of Mormon's claim to be ancient scriptures composed by Nephite prophets and translated by Joseph Smith via divine inspiration. The lack of an extant text in any language dating from before Joseph Smith's time, the myriad problems in connection to the supposed gold plates, Joseph's inability to retranslate the same material after the loss of the 116 pages (and the other inconsistencies associated with that incident), the lack of any plausible geographical context for the book's locations, the mismatch between the book's narrative and the history and cultures of ancient Mesoamerica, and the obvious and quantifiable dependence of the Book of Mormon on the KJV of the Bible are among the many reasons that were presented. Since the only two possibilities anyone entertains, rightly so, is that the Book of Mormon is either such an ancient collection of scriptures (however translated) or a modern fiction produced (with or without help) by Joseph Smith, the evidence against the historicity of the Book of Mormon is evidence for what is here called the modern apocrypha view. The conclusion drawn here is that this view of the ST, the focus within the Book of Mormon of this study, is highly plausible.

Before turning to the ST itself, this study laid a foundation for the critical examination of the ST by examining first the text, historicity, origins, and manner of composition of the Gospel of Matthew (chap. 4) and more specifically of the SM (chap. 5). Quite conventional conclusions regarding these issues were defended:

- The Greek text of Matthew and of the SM has been preserved reliably throughout church history, with what are for the most part only minor secondary readings that made their way into the KJV.
- Matthew was written probably in the 60s or 70s of the first century AD in Greek by a Jewish Christian.
- Matthew presents the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus in a plausible geographical, historical, and cultural context.

- Matthew follows a generally chronological order but arranges much of Jesus' teaching in large thematically-oriented discourses.

- The author drew on the Gospel of Mark and on a non-extant source that was also used, in some form or edition, by Luke.

- The SM (Matt. 5-7) and the SP (Luke 6:20-49) are two different versions of the same historical sermon by Jesus in Galilee.

- Jesus' Galilean sermon was probably more like the version found in Luke 6 than the one found in Matthew 5-7, which was probably augmented with discourse units and sayings originally delivered by Jesus at other times.

- The SM, while faithfully recording Jesus' sayings, shows unmistakeable signs of the Gospel author's arrangement, structuring, literary style, and redaction or wording.

Finally, a careful study of the ST itself was undertaken, comparing it to the SM (both the Greek text and the KJV translation) and examining the ST in its larger Book of Mormon context. These were the findings of critical relevance to the question of the origin of the ST (see §7.9 for a somewhat different summary):

- The ST exhibits clear literary dependence on the SM as it appears in the KJV. This dependence is shown to be fallible and uninspired by the ST following the KJV in its errors while departing from the KJV in minor verbal changes of no consequence (§7.1.1-7). Thus, while the two historical views of the ST do acknowledge some relationship to the KJV, the modern apocrypha view has far greater *explanatory scope* with regard to the details emerging from a close comparison of the two texts.

- The ST is also dependent on Matthew for its selection, arrangement, and presentation of Jesus' sayings (§7.2). This finding is a clear defeater for the two historical views, because the premise of the ST is that Jesus preached to the Nephites essentially the same sermon he had preached in Galilee (3 Ne. 15:1). Conversely, it is a strong piece of evidence indicating the *explanatory scope* of the modern apocrypha view. Mormon scholar Grant Hardy, in a list of hypothetical explanations for the difficulty, began that list with the suggestion that "an omniscient Christ could have delivered essentially the same discourse that Matthew would someday compose." Admitting that such an explanation seems incredible, Hardy commented, "but we are speaking

here of a book that bills itself as delivered by an angel and translated through a seer stone—the ordinary rules may not apply, at least not from a Latter-day Saint perspective" (Hardy 2010, 313 n. 25). If non-Mormons should be careful about not approaching the subject of the Book of Mormon in a sceptical manner, Mormons should avoid using the miraculous *ad hoc* as a *deus ex machina*. Belief in God, angels, and miracles does not commit one to accepting as credible *ad hoc* appeals to the miraculous like this one. Besides, Hardy's suggestion contradicts 3 Nephi 15:1, which quotes Jesus as telling the Nephites, not that he was presenting to them a text that his Galilean apostle would one day write, but a speech that he had already given to his Galilean followers.

- All of the speeches attributed to Jesus in 3 Nephi 11-18, except for the ST in chapters 12-14, are in style, language, and content very much like the speech attributed to Nephi (sixth century BC) in 2 Nephi 31. This fact is explained by the hypothesis that a modern author wrote the other speeches but incorporated into the text a speech that he did not compose, namely the SM, with some editing by that modern author (§7.4). Here the modern apocrypha accounts for evidence not even considered by advocates of the historicity of the ST, and therefore shows itself to have greater *explanatory scope*.

- The differences between the SM and the ST are not the result of the ST being appropriately contextualized for an ancient Nephite audience, but rather of the SM being adapted to the Book of Mormon narrative by a modern author (§7.5). On the other hand, the material in the SM that is repeated unchanged or with only minor verbal changes in the ST pervasively reflects specific elements of the Jewish culture, the social and political context of first-century Roman Palestine, and the material culture of the ancient Mediterranean world (Pharisaic interpretations of the OT Law, Roman conscription practices, Jewish synagogue buildings, etc.). Other parts of the Book of Mormon show that many of these features are attributed anachronistically to the Nephite world in its supposedly historical narrative, not just in the ST. Such lack of appropriate contextualization alongside clear instances of anachronisms are exactly what one would expect if Joseph Smith was the author of the Book of Mormon but not what one would expect if he was an inspired translator of an

ancient text (§7.6). This evidence—which again is pervasive throughout the ST—shows the clearly superior *explanatory scope and power* of the modern apocrypha view.

- Clear allusions to sayings from the SM were found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, many clustered in passages set in the sixth and first centuries BC (2 Nephi 28-33 and Alma 31-34). It follows that the author of those passages had knowledge of the SM and drew freely from it, just as he did from many other NT texts throughout the Book of Mormon (§7.7). This additional evidence, not even considered by advocates of the two historical views, further strengthens the *explanatory scope* of the modern apocrypha view.

Objections to the modern apocrypha view have already been discussed in the analyses of the other two views. These objections have included primarily arguments to enhance the plausibility of the Book of Mormon's historicity: defences of the testimonies of the eleven witnesses who claimed to see the gold plates; alleged evidences of Hebraic grammar and style in the Book of Mormon; attempted correlations of the Book of Mormon with ancient Mesoamerican geography, history, and culture; and assertions that the book is too long and complex for Joseph Smith to have composed it himself. These arguments were all addressed in detail in chapter 6 and summaries of the responses given earlier in this chapter (8.1.2).

Mormons have also commonly argued that non-Mormon Christian criticisms of the Book of Mormon are *ad hoc* in that they assume a sceptical stance toward the Book of Mormon and especially its miraculous origins (the angel revealing the gold plates, the translation using a stone or stones). Care was therefore taken in chapter 3 to set forth an evangelical critical methodology that approached the Book of Mormon in a way that was not question-begging or *ad hoc*. In chapter 6, the arguments against the plausibility of the Book of Mormon were carefully shown not to involve scepticism about the supernatural or miraculous.

In addition, John Welch has presented an argument for understanding the ST as an ancient, ritual-oriented, temple-centred text, which if sound would constitute a major defeater for the modern apocrypha view. This argument was therefore addressed and refuted first with respect to the content and structure of the SM (§5.6) and second with respect to the narrative context of the ST (§7.3).

It is interesting to observe that other than Welch's temple-text interpretation of the SM and the ST, Mormon scholars' objections to the modern apocrypha view have focused entirely on global issues pertaining to the Book of Mormon. The most a fair-minded believing Mormon could claim for such defences of the Book of Mormon is that they enhance its plausibility and therefore diminish the plausibility of the modern apocrypha view of the ST (from highly plausible down to perhaps somewhat plausible or of indeterminate plausibility). Mormon scholars have not yet attempted to show that viewing the ST as historical is a hypothesis with greater explanatory scope and power than the modern apocrypha view, or that the modern apocrypha view requires any *ad hoc* assumptions to work. In particular, Gardner's view cannot identify anything about the ST that is different than it would be on the modern apocrypha view.

The foregoing analysis may now be summed up in terms of the five criteria in the same manner as was done for the other two views.

(1) The modern apocrypha view is *highly plausible*, due to numerous evidences showing that the Book of Mormon is a modern fictive scripture. It is to be expected that many Mormons will disagree with this assessment, since they may ascribe more potency to some of the apologetic arguments that have been marshalled in defence of the Book of Mormon. Representative and important examples of those arguments have been addressed in chapter 6. Nevertheless, many Mormons will disagree. It seems doubtful, in any case, that a reasonable case could be made for viewing the modern apocrypha view as implausible. The best Mormons might fairly claim is that the plausibility of the Book of Mormon (and therefore of the ST apart from matters specific to that text) is of indeterminate plausibility.

(2) There are no successful *defeaters* of the modern apocrypha view, since John Welch's temple-text argument has been shown to be too dubious to function as a defeater in this regard. Thus, the view has no *disconfirming* evidence against it.

(3) The *explanatory scope* of the modern apocrypha hypothesis is far superior to that of the literal translation and non-literal historical views. The modern apocrypha view successfully accounts for the fact that the ST is dependent on the KJV, dependent on Matthew, written in a different style than the other Book of Mormon speeches attributed to Jesus, repeats statements made throughout the SM

that reflected the cultural setting of the SM in Galilee, and contains several clear instances of historical and cultural anachronisms. While the two historical views of the ST offer an explanation of some aspects of some of these evidences, neither comes close to offering a successful account of all of these evidences.

(4) The modern apocrypha view of the ST has far greater *explanatory power* than either the literal translation view or the non-literal historical view. The latter does accommodate many elements of the SM that would have been culturally inapt in the ST to the Nephites in a more effective manner than the literal translation view. In this regard, as has been noted, the *explanatory power* of the non-literal historical view surpasses that of the literal view. Nevertheless, its explanatory power would have been greater if such elements had been infrequent or intermittent in the ST. Once it is understood that such elements pervade the ST, the assumption that Jesus' speech to the Nephites was similar enough to his speech in Galilee to serve as the base text for the translation breaks down.

(5) The modern apocrypha view entails no *ad hoc* assumptions. As has been explained, the criticisms mounted against the plausibility of the Book of Mormon did not proceed on the basis of naturalistic or sceptical assumptions about God, angels, miracles, or revelation. It has not been assumed that such things are real and valid in the case of the Bible but not in the case of the Book of Mormon.

Table 53 compares the three hypotheses in terms of the five criteria used for assessing which of the hypotheses best accounts for all of the available evidence.

Table 53. Comparing the Three Hypotheses		
Literal Translation	*Non-Literal Historical*	*Modern Apocrypha*
Highly implausible	Highly implausible	Highly plausible
High disconfirmation	Moderate disconfirmation	No disconfirmation
Low explanatory scope	Moderate explanatory scope	High explanatory scope
Low explanatory power	Moderate explanatory power	High explanatory power
Somewhat *ad hoc*	Somewhat *ad hoc*	Not at all *ad hoc*

As mentioned in chapter 3, in most cases hypotheses addressing a complex array of facts are not judged simply "true" or "false" (although such judgments do have their place), but as more or less probable or likely. One may think of a spectrum of judgments from "extremely improbable" to "extremely probable" (McCullagh 1984, 52). Considered in this way, the literal translation view would appear to be extremely improbable and the non-literal historical view to be very or highly improbable (i.e., only somewhat less improbable than the first view). The modern apocrypha view, by contrast, appears to be extremely probable. It is simply a far more successful account of all the available evidence than either of the other two views.

It should be noted that even if one adjusts the plausibility judgments and declares all three hypotheses to be of indeterminate judgment (essentially taking plausibility out of consideration), the modern apocrypha view is still clearly superior. What that means is that the findings of this study have shown that the ST is a genuine problem for the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon, independent of any general opinions regarding its status as a whole.

Another scale mentioned in chapter 3 was one advanced for use by forensic document examiners and published by the American Academy of Forensic Science (ASTM 2008). The scale ran from definitely authentic (identification of the document as identical to what is claimed for it) to definitely not authentic (elimination of the document as being what is claimed for it). The full scale ran as follows:

1. Identification (definite conclusion of identity)
2. Strong probability (highly probable, very probable)
3. Probable
4. Indications (evidence to suggest)
5. No conclusion (totally inconclusive, indeterminable)
6. Indications did not
7. Probably did not
8. Strong probability did not
9. Elimination

The conclusion that the modern apocrypha view is highly or extremely probable may be expressed in terms of the ASTM scale as a judgment that there is at least a *strong probability* (8 on the 9-point scale) that the ST was not a translation of an ancient sermon preached by Jesus to the Nephites. Concluding that the text's authenticity has been "eliminated" (9) would be arguably warranted by the evidence,

especially if one accepts the argument of chapter 6 showing that the belief that the Book of Mormon is ancient scripture is highly implausible.

The conclusion reached here has been couched in terms of probability, as an academic, scholarly approach that seeks to draw conclusions in ways that do not go beyond what the evidence can be reasonably shown to support. The conclusion has been drawn that it is "extremely probable" that the ST is not an authentic record of an ancient sermon preached to the Nephites by Jesus. The alternative hypotheses defending the speech's historicity, the literal translation and non-literal historical views, have been shown to be extremely and highly improbable respectively. It would be understandable for advocates or apologists for the Book of Mormon to claim that any such measured judgment leaves room for the possibility that the ST is authentic after all, since the claim has not been made that its authenticity is impossible. Such circumvention of the evidence is no more justifiable in the case of the Book of Mormon than in the case of any other work bearing the characteristic marks of apocryphal or fraudulent literature. What is barely possible yet overwhelmingly unlikely is not to be privileged over what is highly or extremely likely.

It would also be an understandable temptation to appeal to the miraculous, reasoning that divine or angelic agency makes the extremely or highly improbable a reality. However, such a response would be a misunderstanding of the argument of this study. The possibility of divine and angelic agency has already been factored into the analysis. Joseph Smith's religious and miraculous claims have been given fair consideration and found unreliable (because of specific, well-evidenced defeaters) and therefore untrustworthy. When genuine miracles do happen, they do not result in a trail of clues leading away from the conclusion that they did not occur.

8.2 Implications

The conclusion of this study that the ST is part of a modern apocrypha—the Book of Mormon—has implications for Mormonism, for the interpretation of the SM, and for evangelical biblical scholarship.

8.2.1 Implications for Mormonism

The recognition of the Book of Mormon as a modern American apocrypha rather than an ancient Israelite scripture has important ramifications for one's

understanding of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and of the other smaller sects that trace their origins to Joseph Smith. "Mormonism is predicated on the truth of its own history, and the history of the ancient people its founding text describes" (Nuckolls 2010, 839). Joseph himself called the Book of Mormon "the keystone of our religion" (HC 4:461), a statement quoted in the Introduction to the Book of Mormon. LDS Church President Ezra Taft Benson explained that the Book of Mormon is the keystone of LDS witness to Christ, of LDS doctrine, and of the truth of the LDS faith. "Just as the arch crumbles if the keystone is removed, so does all the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon" (Benson 1986). Joseph Smith agreed: "Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none" (*HC* 2:52). More recently, LDS apostle Jeffrey Holland has written: "Either the Book of Mormon is what the Prophet Joseph said it is, or this Church and its founder are false, a deception from the first instance onward" (Holland 2006, 334). Such statements can easily be multiplied from Mormon authorities throughout the religion's history. If the Book of Mormon is a modern apocrypha, it follows that Mormonism is false.

Admittedly, Mormons commonly shield themselves against critical objections to their scriptures and doctrines by insisting that faith ultimately must rest on their religious experience and not critical scholarship. To quote Benson again: "We are not required to prove the Book of Mormon is true or is an authentic record through external evidences—though there are many. It never has been the case, nor is it now, that the studies of the learned will prove the Book of Mormon true or false" (Benson 1987). Similarly, Neal Maxwell asserted, "Science will not be able to prove or disprove holy writ" (Maxwell 1983, 4). Of course, by definition nothing could ever disprove "holy writ" because by definition holy writ, or genuine scripture inspired by God, must be true. One may therefore agree that *if* the Book of Mormon is true scripture, then it could never be disproved by science or scholarship. But what if it is not genuine, inspired scripture? Then critical investigation of its origins and contents might well show that it is not. To preclude this possibility is to deny that one might be able to determine that the medieval *Gospel of Barnabas* or the modern *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* is not authentic ancient scripture.

One may also agree that scholarly study cannot "prove" scripture to be true inasmuch as scripture deals with theological, spiritual, transcendent realities that are

not susceptible to historical or scientific verification. One cannot prove scientifically that God forgives sinners or that eternal life awaits those who put their faith in Christ. However, when religious writings make claims touching on historical and scientific matters, historical and scientific investigation becomes possible.

Hugh Nibley, the most eminent Book of Mormon scholar of the mid-twentieth century, agreed: "The Book of Mormon can and should be tested. It invites criticism, and the best possible test for its authenticity is provided by its own oft-proclaimed provenance in the Old World" (Nibley 1988a, 16). That is precisely what has been done in this study, though not in the way Nibley favoured. By studying the Old World cultural and religious context of the SM, it has been shown that the ST originated in the Old World, beginning with Jesus' teachings in the Galilean mountain and on various other occasions, collected into an anthology selected, arranged, and edited by the author of the Gospel of Matthew, much later translated into English in the KJV Bible, and finally transplanted into the Book of Mormon context by its modern author, Joseph Smith.

Neal Maxwell, following his statement quoted above that science cannot prove or disprove scripture, continued: "However, enough plausible evidence will come forth to prevent scoffers from having a field day, but not enough to remove the requirement of faith" (Maxwell 1983, 4). That is a reasonable expectation in regard to genuine scripture. As argued in this study, though, such "plausible evidence" has not come forth for the Book of Mormon. Instead, evidence from a variety of fields of inquiry shows that the Book of Mormon's historical claims are highly implausible and that the book is almost certainly not what it is purported to be. To accept the Book of Mormon as inspired scripture in the face of such decisive contrary evidence is not faith but credulity.

8.2.2 Implications for the Interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount

Mormons popularly believe that Jesus gave basically the same sermon to the Nephites as he did to the Jews because its teachings were both perfect and universal, "adapted to the wants of all peoples" (Reynolds and Sjödahl 1955, 7:146). John Welch appealed to this perception as part of his defence of the authenticity of the ST: "Indeed, most of the words and phrases, images, ideas, and modes of

logical expression in the Sermon on the Mount are rather universally understandable to all mankind" (Welch 1999, 152).

It is probably fair to say that many other readers of the SM have implicitly or tacitly made the same assumption. As N. T. Wright observed, the SM and indeed much of Jesus' other teaching has often been "generalized into a universal ethic" (Wright 1996, 292). Viewing it in that way, however, inevitably dilutes Jesus' teaching of its potency and risks misunderstanding his message. Just as Jesus did not become a generic man devoid of particularity but a first-century Jewish man from Nazareth, his message was delivered in the context of a particular historical and cultural environment. As Carl Vaught said with a somewhat different focus, "There is a message of universal significance in the Sermon on the Mount, but this universal message can be discovered only in the particularity of the text" (Vaught 2001, xiii).

Exegetical commentaries in recent years have given great attention to interpreting the SM in the context of Jews in Galilee under the Herods and Romans toward the end of the Second Temple era (see especially Keener 2009a; Evans 2012b). This study of the use of the SM as the ST in the Book of Mormon provides a useful extended illustration of what happens when the SM is taken out of that proper historical and cultural context. Joseph Smith thought he could remove the explicit reference to the Pharisees, replace a few difficult verses with more palatable ones, reword some of the sayings to reflect a post-resurrection setting, and make various other minor verbal changes, and the resulting text would be a plausible, appropriate sermon preached by Jesus to the Nephites. It didn't work. The SM is incorrigibly rooted in the cultural soil in which it first emerged.

In order to interpret the SM as accurately as possible and to apply its teachings in the diverse societies in which Christians find themselves today, modern readers must do the hard work of learning all they can about the world in which Jesus and his disciples lived. The ST is an object lesson of the importance of recognizing and respecting the hermeneutical challenges of interpreting ancient Scripture.

8.2.3 Implications for Evangelical Biblical Scholarship

Synoptic source and redaction criticism has played a key role in this study in showing why the Book of Mormon's claim that Jesus preached a sermon to the

Nephites that followed the same outline and had nearly the same contents as the SM in the Gospel of Matthew is not historically credible. Yet many evangelicals remain uncomfortable with or even hostile to these critical methods of inquiry into the origins and composition of the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., Linnemann 1992; Thomas and Farnell 1998; Geisler and Roach 2011; Geisler and Farnell eds. 2014).

The ongoing debate about the value and theological fidelity of these methods generally has presupposed that the Synoptic problem is only about the three Synoptic Gospels in the NT canon. It turns out that an understanding of Synoptic origins and relationships has some relevance in exposing the unhistorical and fraudulent nature of noncanonical gospels, such as Third Nephi in the Book of Mormon. Such an application of Synoptic criticism thus has important if surprising apologetic value in defending the orthodox position that the four Gospels in the NT canon are the only authoritative accounts of the life, teachings, and passion of Jesus Christ.

8.3 Areas for Further Research

The investigation in this study of the relationship between the ST and the SM has demonstrated the fruitfulness of the application of the tools and information base of biblical studies to the critical examination of the Book of Mormon. There are many other potentially informative and illuminating studies of the Book of Mormon that remain to be pursued.

Biblical scholarship has potential relevance to almost every part of the Book of Mormon; a few examples may be mentioned here. As has been mentioned a few times in this study, John Welch has produced a number of publications arguing that the Book of Mormon contains compelling examples of chiasmus; his most notable example is found in Alma 36 (Welch 1991). LDS scholars have devoted a great deal of attention to the speech attributed to King Benjamin in Mosiah 1-6, among other things comparing the speech to farewell discourses in the Bible (see especially Welch and Ricks eds. 1998). Mormon scholars have also defended the authenticity of the Isaiah quotations in the Book of Mormon, an issue addressed briefly in this study but deserving of a more thorough treatment (see especially Parry and Welch eds. 1998).

Another type of study of relevance pertains to efforts by LDS scholars to situate the Book of Mormon in the religious and cultural context of the Jewish people in the First Temple period, specifically in the final decades before the Babylonian Conquest (i.e., just before Lehi and his party would have left Jerusalem and travelled to the Americas). The most notable work in this regard is the collection of essays entitled *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem* (Welch, Seely, and Seely eds. 2004). Biblical scholars should give this work and related studies attention if for no other reason than the fact that the Mormons have found an ally in Margaret Barker, an independent researcher who has argued that the NT reflects religious and theological perspectives rooted in the lost traditions of the First Temple (see especially Barker 1987, 1992). Barker contributed to *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, as did LDS writer Kevin Christensen, who views Barker's revisionist paradigm as crucially supportive of Mormon scripture and theology (see also Christensen 2001). Barker also presented a paper on Joseph Smith and the First Temple tradition (Barker 2009) to the same effect.

In addition to the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith produced other texts accepted by Mormons as scripture. While biblical scholarship is of relevance in assessing the theology of all such texts, it is of special relevance in assessing Joseph's claim to have translated ancient scriptures. Two of his other publications are of relevance here. The first is the Joseph Smith Translation (JST), Joseph's supposedly revision of the KJV. The JST has traditionally been understood as purporting to "restore" the Bible to its original meaning, though LDS scholars generally argue that the matter is more complicated. Very little has been done to bring the tools of biblical scholarship to bear on the JST (for a good study of the JST of the Gospel of John, see Groat 1990).

The other Mormon scripture of relevance is the Book of Abraham, a first-person account by the Genesis patriarch that Joseph Smith claimed he translated from ancient papyri. The rediscovery in 1967 and subsequent study of surviving fragments of the papyri have led Egyptologists to the firm conclusion that there is no relationship whatsoever between the papyri and the Book of Abraham (see especially Ritner 2011). The work of Egyptologists has been excellent, but it would be well worth complementing with contributions from biblical scholars addressing the

textual and theological issues of the Book of Abraham, especially its relationship to the Book of Genesis.

Finally, some attention has been given in this study to comparing the use of the SM in the Book of Mormon with the use of the SM in two other apocryphal gospels (§7.8). Biblical scholars have studied such apocryphal literature (notably Goodspeed 1996), yet much work still can be done in this area. Studies are needed comparing this body of literature (which is growing as new discoveries are made) to the biblical texts that they typically utilize or mimic.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the proliferation of apocryphal Jewish and Christian literature throughout the past two millennia attest to the spiritual power of the biblical writings. The careful comparison of apocryphal and biblical literature is valuable not only as a means for providing critical evaluations of the former but also for the enriched understanding of and appreciation for the latter that such study can yield.

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